

THE DISCOURSES ON THE CANUDOS WAR:
IDEOLOGIES AND RHETORIC

By
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The subject of this study is the literature propagated by the Canudos war of 1897 Brazil. Canudos was a settlement of religious followers in the backlands of Brazil. The newly formed Republican forces destroyed Canudos under the assumption Canudos was a Monarchist Restorationist movement. Interpretations of the Canudos phenomenon vary in the literature of different discourses--historiography, essay, anthropology, Marxist and historical novel. This study analyzes the Canudos literature across these disciplines to lay bare the writers' ideological underpinnings. It also examines the rhetorical techniques characteristic of each of the discourses.

Canudos history is recorded by contemporary military chroniclers and war correspondents to justify their participation in the war. The army's attack on the

Canudos population is inverted to a defense against an assault on the Republic and its institutions. After the Canudos threat was removed, Brazilian intellectuals examine the conflict according to the categories of positivistic science. Euclides da Cunha's Os Sertões rationalizes the fratricide as an inevitable result of the dichotomization of the cultures of the interior and the littoral, and as a problem of miscegenation. The social sciences analyze the phenomenon as a messianic and millenarian movement. Ideas developed by sociologists and anthropologists evolve from theories of mass insanity, to structuralist, functionalist and semiotic analyses. Later, Marxist interpreters rewrite Canudos historiography according to the configurations of the class struggle theory. They view the Canudos movement as an anachronistic attempt at land reform and the institution of egalitarian principles. Finally, the study examines a fictional portrayal of the Canudos event in Mario Vargas Llosa's historical novel La guerra del fin del mundo. The novel's characters represent opposing fanaticisms in a narrative world designed to symbolize Latin American politics.

This study illustrates how each of the discourses manipulates data and employs rhetorical devices to convince the reader of the sincerity of its affirmations. The intent is to challenge hermeneutic interpretation by exposing the lack of validation across the disciplines. All literatures,

whether based on the precepts of fact or fiction, serve to propagate the myths relevant to the writers' times.

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the politics of discourse as it applies to the divergent interpretations originating from single historical event, the Canudos war of 1897 in Brazil. Through an examination of the respective ideologies and rhetoric employed in each of the discourses, we plan to expose the system of reinforcement around which official history revolves. A comparison of the nature and trajectory of the various models will suggest certain epistemological concerns regarding interpretation, dealt with in the conclusions.

The presupposition of this study is that all written discourses, including scientific and artistic, are basically literary in nature so may be analyzed as literary texts. Writers construct models or paradigms to impose meaning and to make sense of their symbolic representations of historical reality. Their rhetoric reinforces their perceptions of that reality. The relationship between ideology and rhetoric can be seen dramatically at work in various discourses perpetuated by a single event in history. The reductionism of the paradigm and the persuasion

principle of rhetoric endow these writers with the justification for their beliefs and, in the case of the military participant-historians, sometimes their actions. We will see how each discourse has a "history" of its own, i.e., an identifiable ideology, just as each author brings his or her own "history" to the text.

The discourses under examination here employ, consciously or not, different methods to persuade the reader that their account of the facts (and consequently their ideological stance) is accurate. The first is a political discourse employed to justify the war in the cause of nationalism. This begins as "official" military history which attempts to justify the Monarchist conspiracy theory. The discourse continues in the writing of contemporary Brazilian intellectuals who try to understand and denounce the fratricide and then prescribe the solution of "civilizing" the sertão. The discourse of sociology, anthropology and political science appeals to social science categories to explain and extract social laws from this and similar phenomena. These writers employ divergent approaches, reflective of the currents of theory in the social sciences, but all concentrate on the Canudos movement's messianic content. In the 1950's, Marxist discourse revises the original "official" history to impose a mechanistic class struggle theory to explain the Canudos movement as a socialist utopia. Finally, the historical

novel, represented by Vargas Llosa's La guerra del fin del mundo, employs fictional rhetoric to portray past events in a manner as mythifying as the other discourses under discussion, to provide insights into the role of fanaticism and misunderstanding in Latin American political reality.

Although we intend to analyze these discourses in their literary aspect and ideological bias, each discipline should be judged according to different criteria, for each follows different methods. Problems of validation, sources and theory that arise in non-fictional discourse will be dealt with in the following chapters.

Historical Background

The Canudos war was fought in 1897 in the interior of Bahia, Brazil, between the military forces of the newly-formed Republic and a group of "Monarchist rebels." The Canudos settlement was finally occupied and leveled by the Republican army after four military campaigns.

The Republic defined Antônio Conselheiro and his people as Monarchists and declared war on an alleged conspiracy against the new regime. For contemporary scientist Nina Rodrigues (As Coletividades Anormais), Conselheiro was a mad man feeding off of the mental instability of the sertanejo (inhabitant of the backlands). In Euclides da Cunha's positivistic account, Os Sertões, the sertanejos were products of their physical environment and their

race--examples of atavism. According to the anthropological analysis, Conselheiro and his followers were religious fanatics involved in a messianic movement awaiting the apocalypse. Today Conselheiro is referred to as a social reformer who initiated his own brand of land reform. We will never uncover what really happened at Canudos, for even if the voice of the Canudos participants had not been silenced by defeat, any reconstruction of events would necessarily be distorted. The interpretations under examination show sometimes incompatible reconstructions of the same historical phenomenon. We hope to show not only the various perspectives on the Canudos phenomenon but also how these models of apprehending the Canudos conflict are products of the ideologies of each group of authors.

First, an introduction to the historical event is necessary. For this we will consider Antônio Conselheiro and his actions in their historical context.¹ Canudos leader Antônio Conselheiro appeared on the scene in the Bahian sertão during a period of national political instability. The Republic was instituted in Brazil in 1889, one year after the Monarchist government ceded to abolitionist pressures to emancipate black slaves. The early Republican era marked a period of indefinición when different political sectors struggled to dictate directions for the nation while the military fought to put down revolts in several areas of Brazil. During this politically-charged time, it became

immensely unpopular to be branded anything other than Republican and anything suggesting a threat to national consolidation had to be destroyed. It was Conselheiro's misfortune to be deemed such a threat.²

Antônio Vicente Mendes Maciel (1828-1897), called the Conselheiro or Counselor due to the prestige he gained among his people, was one among many religious pilgrims who wandered the backlands of Brazil until circumstances forced on him a memorable role in Brazilian history. He began his religious career in 1877 as a beato, a religious type common to the sertão of the Northeast. The beatos were transients who performed a religious service to the members of a host community--they collected alms in return for prayers for the souls of sinners. Maciel offered his services by collecting money and organizing labor for the construction of churches, dams and cemeteries. In the early days of his beatismo, local vicars not only accepted but sanctioned his work because it was under the Church's authority to care for the cemeteries and religious constructions. The Church lacked personnel in the sertão and welcomed help on much needed churches. To prevent the spread of disease it became necessary to remove the cemeteries from beside the churches and relocate them outside of the towns. In these activities, Maciel was instrumental.

At some point, Maciel apparently became more popular than the priests among the sertanejos, or residents of the

sertão. He preached and practiced a very orthodox kind of Catholicism which his followers preferred to the corrupt practices of many of the priests. His doctrine could be described as conservative and naive. The only liberal platform was his opposition to slavery. He followed the practices outlined in the Missão Abreviada³ that conveyed a traditional "fire and brimstone" message. His ideology appears to have been a Manichaeian one: what was not good was evil. The Conselheiro associated Masonry and Protestantism with the work of the devil and later identified the Republic with the AntiChrist. We know from the Conselheiro's writings that he believed it was the monarch's God-given right to rule and it was princess Isabel who had been inspired by God to free the slaves.⁴ When the Republic was established, the only change that affected the sertanejos was increased taxation, for the new government reorganized the federal and state responsibilities so the municipalities gained the right to impose unrestricted tax rates. The Republic for these people represented no improvement, perhaps the contrary.

With Conselheiro's increasing prestige and the attention of higher Church authorities, some vicars started to oppose his presence. Conselheiro attacked the sinful behavior of the wayward priests. In 1882, the Bahian archbishop initiated a campaign against Conselheiro over a question of authority and officially forbade him to preach.

The Conselheiro was immersed by evolving circumstance into a more social sphere for it seems that he caused a disturbance in the work force when he entered each town. For this and other reasons, he attracted the animosity of some of the property owners. This situation was complicated further with Abolition. As Conselheiro and his increasing number of followers wandered on their pilgrimage, they did not pose a physical threat to properties, but freed slaves may have fled the plantations to join his followers, adding to the imbalance of labor.

Canudos was originally a small village with a scant population. When travelers passed through the region they often rested there overnight. Antônio da Mota owned a store on one side of Canudos' Vasa Barris river that dealt in leather. In 1883 Mota had invited Antônio Conselheiro to build a chapel and he started construction. Later in 1893 Conselheiro returned to Canudos seemingly for strategic reasons since it was after an incident with the police at Masseté over tax collection. Canudos offered the conselheiristas protection as the location was difficult to access especially during periods of drought. The population at Canudos increased rapidly. Rich and poor people were attracted to Conselheiro's community as it prospered during its short lifetime. They sold their property to move to Canudos and upon entry donated a portion to the community. Sometime after settling with his people, Conselheiro

appointed certain individuals to maintain order and organize defense. Although the poor were maintained through donations to the community, correspondence from inhabitants leads us to believe that the residents retained property and private businesses. They cultivated crops and developed a leather export business.

The Conselheiro phenomenon turned from a religious to a political one, as military aggression against the settlement followed the hostility of the neighboring land owners and the Church. A single incident in 1986 started a series of events that finally led to Canudos' destruction.

Conselheiro had ordered wood from a business in neighboring Joazeiro. It was his habit to purchase special materials for the construction of a new church in his settlement and have them floated down river to a certain point to be picked up by his representatives. The wood was prepaid but did not appear, for it seems the new local judge was a personal enemy of the Conselheiro and prevented its dispatch. The canudenses or Canudos residents decided to go to Joazeiro to claim what was theirs. Judge Leoni requested police forces from state governor Luis Viana to prevent the "invasion" of his town by Conselheiro and his followers. The governor approved the troops under the condition that they were only to prevent assault. Leoni manipulated the situation by convincing commander Pires to march on Canudos. The men and women en route to Joazeiro from Canudos surprised the troops

at dawn at Uauá and battle ensued. After heavy losses, the canudenses drove the detachment of soldiers off.

Complications made a bad situation worse. The defeat came to the attention of the government and the press. The governor of Bahia had few men to spare because banditry was rampant in other parts of the state, so the matter was referred to the federal forces. In the capital, political tension from the change of government reigned--Republicans attacked Monarchists and in the military Florianists opposed the president. The next campaign against the canudenses with national troops was fueled by the press and the belief that this "anti-Republican" settlement was conspiring with influential Monarchists to launch a Restoration movement like the recent one in Rio Grande do Sul that had just been pacified. The Republicans declared war on what they thought was a threat to national consolidation. The canudenses were so numerous, employed such artful strategies and were so committed that it took four military campaigns to destroy them. The army finally proved its strength to the nation. They leveled the town; nothing remained. The throats of many prisoners were slashed by the soldiers--it was a long, bitter and bloody war on both sides.

Ideological Bias

The above introduction hopefully provides a fair rendition of the background events and puts them into a

historical context, or at least gives an image of the historical role performed at Canudos, since our own premise is to question the validity of any true objectivity in narration: historical, scientific or fictional.

The purpose of the study is to examine the discourses concerning the Canudos movement and war: historical, intellectual, social science, Marxist and the historical novel. Each of the discourses originates from the same point of departure--the Canudos phenomenon--but interprets the event from different perspectives. The Canudos literature has perpetuated many myths--the Monarchist conspiracy, the Conselheiro's miracles, the movement's apocalyptic and sebastianist elements, the settlement's communism, rumors, and heroic acts. This study will delve into the nature of each.

Here we will define "ideology" as a determining position which by acting upon the world claims authority over that world to validate itself. That is, ideology refers here to the formation of the respective authors as shown through the models they choose in their literature to capture the "history" of Canudos. Each collective discourse has developed different metaphors or paradigms, from patriotism or science to economics or fiction.

The definition of ideology as shared by a group but not directly representative of reality corresponds to our treatment of knowledge as less than objective. Knowledge is

based on fact, but by the nature of their medium, facts are determined by convention--the conventions of history, science, mathematics, etc. Each has its own methods to maintain a standard of validation, but even these methods change over time. Language, the communicator of facts, is also determined by convention, so both knowledge and language are "negotiable." So-called facts are prey to the manipulations of rhetoric and interpretation. Rhetoric carries with it the power of persuasion and the legitimization of control. This power is largely held by a dominant or "official" voice. Since Canudos was completely destroyed and what might be called the canudenses' "voice" has long since been silenced, this gap has been filled by "official" voices speaking about this community and for this community. Given these assumptions, we treat any literature, whether determined to be founded on science, art, or a combination of the two, as fiction and its form as the rhetoric of power.

The history of Canudos, throughout each of the different discourses, is an intellectual history of a popular phenomenon. The purpose of our study is to examine the nature of the collective discourses of different ideologies and examine the characteristics of the interplay between their language and their message to expose the objectives behind them. We hope to disclose some of the

flaws in each of the models used to recover this past, as well as the systematic subversion of the popular element. Our conclusions will address the process of dichotomization which surfaces in each of the discourses and suggest an alternative to the method of hermeneutics: cross-validation among genres.

Notes

¹ Special thanks to Professor José Calasans. It was after a conversation with him in October of 1986 that I was able to get an insight on certain background events and a clear perspective on how they fit together to see the Canudos phenomenon as a logical result of natural conditions that became 'historic' due to an interesting turn of circumstances. Details originate from the considerable bibliography on Canudos. For a complete annotated bibliography on the Canudos war, refer to José Augusto Vaz Sampaio et. al., Canudos: Subsídios para a sua Reavaliação Histórica (Rio: Monteiro Aranha, S.A., 1986).

² For more background on the contemporary political climate, see Elísio de Araujo, Atravez de Meio Século, 92-112 and Pedro Moniz de Aragão, "Canudos e os Monarquistas," Revista do Instituto Arqueológico Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano (Pernambuco) 39 (1904) 204-54.

³ Padre Manoel José Gonçalves Couto, Missão Abreviada (Porto, Portugal: 1873).

⁴ See J.C. de Ataliba Nogueira, Antônio Conselheiro e Canudos (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1974).

MILITARY HISTORY:
THE RHETORIC OF A REPUBLICAN RATIONALIZATION

Literary Considerations

The discipline of history occupies the void between the exactitude of science and artistic interpretation. Historiography functions through narrative.¹ In defining historical "narrative," we appeal to Hayden White's emplotment theory, which describes historical narrative as an extended metaphor because it mediates between data and comprehension. Historical narratives "succeed in endowing sets of past events with meanings, over and above whatever comprehension they provide by appeal to putative causal laws, by exploiting the metaphorical similarities between sets of real events and the conventional structures of our fictions."² To impose the structure of a story to recount history necessitates the linearization of co-existing phenomena, the dramatization of events, and the reduction of events in time. We will also see in the patriotic rhetoric of the military discourse the proliferation of identifiable patriotic images and recognizable metaphors.

History does not "describe" the past as much as "construct" the past. The (re)construction is an interpretation, not only because of the selection and

omission of details and the obvious constraints on the retrieval of data, but also because the information is filtered through the ideology and the particular perspective of the historian. We realize the obvious bias of the participant/historians, but we can also learn a great deal about these authors from their writings. "Official" history can be characterized as stemming from a collective ideology,³ in this discourse it is the "ideology" of Republicanism. Its purpose and direction is indicated in the language of its historical "representation."⁴ Historiography is a specific form of narrative whose "fictive element" is the ideological manipulations of its authors.

The historical "facts" are then constituted as elements of a narrative and constituted a second time as elements of a verbal structure written for a specific, manifest or latent, purpose.⁵ It is only within the context of a story form that these facts take on meaning.⁶ White maintains that emplotment gives historical events meaning or value: "recorded historical events," he writes, ". . . are story elements. The events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motif repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like--in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the

emplotment of a novel or a play."⁷ The Canudos narrative is an episode of the "story" of the establishment of Brazilian national identity.

Official History

To date, no one has written a complete history of the Canudos phenomenon which accounts for the events on the national scene, the military front and the conselheirista camp. The canudenses were silenced in a very real way, thus complicating the reconstruction of the events leading to the war. The Canudos episode entered the annals of Brazilian history as a victory of the Republican army. Canudos historiography can be characterized as military history not only because of the political significance of the armed conflict, but also because most of the contemporary documenters of the conflict were not historians by training but actual participants in or witnesses to the war. The massive documentation that has survived on Canudos began almost simultaneously with the events of the war, in both the military chronicles and newspaper reporting. this section groups the chronicles and journalistic reports together because they were aligned in patriotic objective. The war correspondents were not only affiliated in some way with the military but also shared in the same ideology and rhetoric.

Theirs was more than a mere documentation of military movements: Republican army officials recorded the tragedy as an affirmation of their participation in a drama of grave national import. They were especially motivated in the face of attacks on the army for certain failures during the campaign and criticisms of their actions after it was discovered that the original pretense of their attack on a Restoration movement proved false. The vindication continued in the literature long after the Monarchist conspiracy theory was rejected; it was not a short-lived phenomenon.⁸

The Canudos military historians recorded, chronicled, and commented on the events of the war. The military histories approximate the chronicle or record form. Hayden White defines the chronicle as an unfulfilled genre of history because it falls short of true narrative. Its only organizing principle is the central subject--here the Canudos campaign. Its code is chronology--in the Canudos campaign the code is the sequence of events of the war. Most of the episodes are recounted in the third person with an occasional lapse into first person relation when a particular episode was personally witnessed by the narrator, but each consistently speaks as a member of the patriotic cause against a common enemy. In this first person plural narration, the "we" is the Republican army and its sympathizers. The chronicle aspires to "tell a story" but

fails because it has no conclusion.⁹ The chroniclers cease writing upon victory over the enemy but they draw no real conclusions; the military chronicles record a series of events in chronology but do not achieve the closure of history proper by summing up the meaning of the chain of events at Canudos. To "sum up" might be tantamount to admitting the falsity of the war.

As has been mentioned, most of the chroniclers are participants who write to justify their own actions and to legitimize their presence in the sertão.¹⁰ They are mostly army officials who offer eye-witness testimony and a personal point of view in their documentation of the progress of the war. These military "depositions" (depoimentos) are generally taken to form part of the national history of Brazil, regardless of any apparent bias or suppositions made by the authors.

Military Chroniclers

In 1902 Aristedes Augusto Milton published probably the most detailed and complete source of its kind for recounting the events surrounding the war.¹¹ In "A Campanha de Canudos: Memoria Lida no Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro," Milton not only chronicles the campaign but also seeks to discover the origins and true intentions of the conselheiristas (whereas many others felt the need to presume the culpability of the enemy). Milton's main target

is the armed suppression of the Canudos rebellion, but, unlike most of the army chroniclers, he also criticizes some of the military decisions. The underlying theme of the necessity of the war and his eulogization of the army are inconsistent with Milton's commentaries and asides which protest the excessive violence and suggest a modified campaign. Milton's comments imply a questioning of the sincerity of the Republic's intentions in the sertão yet the work as a whole still reflects the collective spirit of the moment: the canudenses may not have been Restorationists but they were criminals threatening public order and the new regime.

Published in the same year was Henrique Duque-Estrada de Macedo Soares' A Guerra de Canudos which is a diary of the military movements, mostly of the fourth expedition. The then corporal (alferes) Soares combines personal testimony with occasional documents and military orders in his narrative history of the campaign, lending an air of authenticity. Soares' text has been rescued from oblivion with 1959 and 1985 editions while Milton's more comprehensive record remains buried in the historical archives.

Antônio Constantino Néri was a coronel who led a brigade during the fourth expedition with general Savaget's column. His A Quarta Expedição contra Canudos, a diary of the travels and battles of the second column, was published

earlier than the rest, in 1898. Néri prefaces his record of the military movements with a tirade against the criminals and fanatics of Canudos, attempting to 'shed some light' on the "mystery" of Canudos. Néri, among others, vents his rancor against the enemy through the catharthic act of writing. These same comments and opinions, however, are repeated in the literature of later writers. With his 1960 Expedições Militares contra Canudos, Tristão de Alencar Araripe defended the expedition leaders, attacked for their mismanagement of the military movements, if not for their loyalties. He covers the martial aspect of the Canudos campaign, but it is more a systematic analysis of the difficulties encountered by soldier and officer alike, along with personal interpretations and commentaries following each of his chapters.

Lieutenant coronel Dantas Barreto wrote probably the most detailed description of the fourth campaign¹² in Ultima Expedição de Canudos, 1898 and Destruição de Canudos, 1912. These two versions are almost identical in content. Elísio de Araujo contributed to the literature with Atravez de Meio Século (1932), briefly relating the second and third expeditions and how these failures affected politics in the capital. He was a police official in Rio at the time. General João Pereira de Oliveira recounts a Canudos combat in July of 1897 in "Arrancada heroica" (1958) and Salomão de Souza Dantas, a soldier on the first expedition, analyzes as

well as describes the Canudos episode in his Aspectos e Contrastes: Ligeiro Estudo sobre o Estado da Bahia (1922).

Journalists

The newspaper reporting of the war correspondents assigned to the Canudos campaign reflects the same sentiments and purpose as the histories. They share in the same military discourse--and this includes the famous Euclides da Cunha before and during his trip to the Bahian sertão--for they were as ignorant of the nature of the Canudos movement and as ideologically bound to defending the Republican cause as the soldiers.

The majority of war correspondents appeared during the final campaign (March-Oct. 1897). At this time, the political climate in the littoral and especially in the capital Rio de Janeiro was nearing hysteria over the failure of Moreira César's expedition (Feb.-March 1897). Jacobin Republicans accused Monarchist sympathizers for the failure of César's campaign, convinced that the Restorationists played a key part in the suspect Canudos movement. To capsize, the result of the shocking devastation of the Republican hero César served in the volatile atmosphere as catalyst to rioting, the burning of Monarchist press and the assassination of famous Monarchist Gentil de Castro.¹³

The nature of reporting in the contemporary Brazilian newspapers has been carefully studied by literary critic

Walnice Nogueira Galvão.¹⁴ In appearance, the journalism of the turn of the century in Brazil bears little relation to the more modern journalism in objectivity, although even in the modern genre it is impossible to avoid contamination of political or religious affiliation or biased reporting regardless of any explicit standard of journalistic truth. The Brazilian newspapers of that epoch were affiliated with particular parties or political philosophies. And during the early Republican period of upheaval, Galvão describes examples of outrageous propaganda and the credulity of many readers. Every day, newspapers printed not only "news" but rumors, intrigues, personal political rhetoric, satires, fabricated letters, and even "evidence" of the Canudos Monarchist conspiracy with international connections. The press clearly affected the Canudos campaign for it contributed to the panic after the César defeat. The two acted symbiotically: the news provoked army retribution of their national disgrace and the campaign further flooded the newspapers. In fact, Galvão suggests that the Canudos affair was manipulated by politicians to be the nation's scapegoat and the press was the vehicle used to rally the nation together to consolidate against a common enemy and thus draw attention from the other innumerable problems throughout the nation.¹⁵ José Bastos describes this early Republican period as lacking homogeneity and any deep ideological consciousness:¹⁶ the Canudos danger might have

unified the Republican factions, for the military histories demonstrate a united front under the Republican cause and its institutions.

Even though the Canudos journalists were individuals hired by different newspapers of perhaps different political affiliations, they speak of one voice. Some of the war correspondents focused more on publishing personal logs, anecdotes, their trip diaries, and personal observations than on details like battles, tactics, daily movements and data on casualties, but their contributions blend in well with those of the military participants. During the heat of battle the writing of both contingents reflects increasing emotion as their tone becomes more declamatory. These reports entertain some variety of opinion but a common theme runs throughout and their rhetoric, linguistic subtleties of rationalization and emotion in reporting, underline a unified purpose.

The Power of Rhetoric

History as text is accessible only through the medium of verbal artifacts so it is, as other literature, subject to the distortions of ideological elements due to its very textuality.¹⁷ Rhetoric is the "principle of discourse formation in those speech events that aim at persuasion or impulsion to action rather than description, demonstration, or explication."¹⁸ Here we will examine the rhetorical

images and language common to the military discourse on Canudos.

We begin with the report filed by the Bahian archbishop's commission to Canudos in 1895 to illustrate the power of the printed word. This is a religious document, but it is key to understanding the rationalization that motivated the military action documented in this section. Its author, friar João Evangelista Marciano managed to turn a religious matter into a political one which then played a decisive role in actually promoting the war.¹⁹ It is the first example of anti-Canudos propaganda and it was sanctioned by Church authorities. The archbishop had sent friar Marciano and committee to Canudos with the mission of dispersing the population and returning them to their homes. The official purpose was to bring the "true" Church doctrine to the population.²⁰

Friar Marciano tried to "reason" with Conselheiro and his followers to show them the errors of their doctrine (doutrina errada) but was unsuccessful in even gaining their confidence. He found no offenses to the Church such as Conselheiro's sacrilegiously performing the sacraments, so he berated the followers for their excessive self-sacrifice in fasting. He also tried to explain to an unreceptive audience that they must accept the dictates of the new Republican regime for the Church had historically accepted all forms of government. In a condescending tone, the friar

branded Conselheiro's preaching as false and his followers' behavior as offensive to religion and a "threat to public order"--this catch-phrase would become the justification for armed aggression against the canudenses. Angry over his hostile reception and hasty retreat from the settlement, the friar accused Canudos of being a dangerous and armed sect, practicing a "subversive" doctrine, with thousands of thieves and assassins who were perhaps paid by Monarchists. Here begins a "code switching" of paradigms from the question of religious authority to political conspiracy.

The Canudenses' Attack

As mentioned in the introduction, an incident over the collection of wood from Joazeiro precipitated military aggression against the canudenses. Rumors reported that Conselheiro had plans to sack the city with his men. To justify the first expedition (Nov. 1896), Tristão de Alencar Araripe writes in 1960 that there was "some foundation" to these rumors since it was Conselheiro's habit to acquire materials in Joazeiro and in Salvador--soon he would have marched on the Bahian capital.²¹ Milton, at least, concedes that then district judge Leoni took advantage of the rumors to exact revenge on Conselheiro for a past grievance: Leoni called for state troops then manipulated them into marching on the "bandits" rather than following orders to merely protect Joazeiro.²² Details vary but official history has

recorded the Uauá incident to favor the Republican soldiers over Conselheiro's "army." Conselheirista men, women and children on a pilgrimage toward Joazeiro arrived at the soldiers' encampment at Uauá at dawn. It is not known whether the poorly armed canudenses diverted their wood retrieving mission to attack the soldiers (who obviously planned to assault their settlement) or whether theirs was just a pilgrimage. Luciano Carneiro records that they "surprised" the sleeping soldiers²³ when, in the words of governor Viana, the army detachment was "rushed"²⁴ by the conselheiristas, i.e. the canudenses attacked the soldiers. The episode is recorded in the annals of official history as a government victory despite the army retreat, for the enemy started out with superiority of numbers (no mention of the army's superiority of arms--the pilgrims carried banners and hunting rifles) but the detachment lost only 11 men to the 100 out of 130 conselheiristas.²⁵

Despite the illogic behind the assumption that Conselheiro wanted to attack Joazeiro, the military historians needed to believe that the canudenses were capable of and likely to realize this threat. But to justify armed retribution, the Republican Army needed to believe that the canudenses were not only a threat but had actually attacked the Republic in some way. Their portrayal of the Uauá incident, which would become the first expedition against Canudos, is the first of a series of

machinations which perceive the conselheiristas as the assaulters: they threatened to attack neighboring towns, assaulted police in an ambush while camped overnight in Tucano,²⁶ attacked the soldiers at Uauá, and worst of all, they attacked "Republican Institutions." Throughout the discourse, the jagunços are portrayed as the attackers; the army are the defenders. This belief was necessary to validate the war as a preventative.²⁷ Their perception of an attempt by Canudos to exterminate the "Republican hosts" justified their own demolition of the settlement.

It is the enemy's supposed attack on the Republic which allows the Republican army's defense of national consolidation. Paradoxically, this defense comes in the form of armed assault on the enemy in the far reaches of their settlement in the sertão of Bahia. The army's offensive "defense" was justified throughout the histories and journalistic reports during the campaign by the belief in a Monarchist conspiracy that labeled Canudos a Restoration movement set to undermine the government's effort to consolidate the Republican state. Outside of Bahia, this "Monarchist plot" flooded newspapers, reports, documents, and even Congressional debates (this included figures like Euclides da Cunha, Rui Barbosa and Machado de Assis)--many took the rumors to be true. Reporter Hoche (pseudonym for military engineer Siqueira Menezes) emphasizes the Monarchism of the enemy calling them

restorationists and impatriots, for example.²⁸ It was believed that powerful Monarchist sympathizers conspired with Conselheiro and supplied him with arms to attack the Republican forces while other conspirators would capture the Armada and assault from Argentina--the Republican forces were still wary after the recent campaign against separatists in Rio Grande do Sul. Some even believed that foreign military officials were in Canudos instructing the rebels in the use of modern arms and equipment.²⁹

Bahian Collusion

In this epoch of "Republican Terror,"³⁰ Bahian governor Luis Viana was implicated in the Canudos situation. He was accused of collusion in the presumed Monarchist conspiracy in the press and suspected of such in the military histories because of relative inaction against the enemy when the governor refused federal forces so as to retain state autonomy in the matter. The military personnel thought they had come up with proof of a Monarchist conspiracy when the soldiers heard and saw the explosive effect of the bullets from the enemy's guns. Soares records that this ammunition must have come from the modern Mannlichers and Mausers which the rebels would not have access to without outside aid.³¹ Manuel Benício, war correspondent and Bahian who had previous experience of Canudos and seemed to be the single voice of dissension among the reporters, explained that the

improvised scraps of metal used as projectiles from the canudenses' makeshift weapons would have had the same spontaneously explosive effect seen on the soldiers' wounds.³² Others recount an incident in Sete Lagoas, when police tried unsuccessfully to capture a small caravan supposedly transporting weapons from Minas Gerais, as proof of Monarchist participation. Even in 1958, Dante de Melo still insists that not only did the Monarchists supply arms to the jagunços but he believes coronel Moreira César to have been shot by one of his soldiers, to create panic among the Republican forces.³³

Euclides da Cunha's rhetoric helped fuel the fire in the capital with the publication of his "Nossa Vendéia" (March-July 1897).³⁴ Euclides was convinced during the war that Canudos was a Restoration movement and he carried that belief into the sertão as a reporter on the fourth campaign, as well. In this article he perceives Canudos to be dangerous to Republican institutions, drawing a parallel between the French counter-revolutionary Vendée revolt and Brazil's own rebellion. Euclides' "Vendéia" served perfectly as war propaganda as it explains (through analysis of geographic environment and the guerrilla character of the warfare in both historic moments) the failures of the Moreira César campaign and calls for the inevitable victory of the Republic.

Up until the final campaign, popular opinion on the Monarchist idea could not be dissuaded. The relative unconcern in Bahia and the few voices of reason in the capital, such as returning official Carlos Telles' published letter claiming that the Restoration conspiracy was a mere delusion,³⁵ went unheeded. But toward the end of the fourth campaign and especially after the final assault on Canudos most of the military personnel came to realize that the Monarchist conspiracy theory was false.³⁶

Skepticism over the political intent of the conselheiristas increased during the last campaign, especially among the reporters, who were less emotionally involved than the soldiers because they were further removed from the actual battles and experienced less of an emotional need to believe that the enemy was not only a physical but an ideological threat. For example, Lélis Piedade gives credence to the suspicion of Monarchist aid to the jagunços until the end of the campaign when he reports that most generally agreed that there was no conspiracy involving politics at Canudos. Néri logs in his diary that they lacked the evidence to link Conselheiro with enemies of the Republic but he, as Piedade and Barreto also note, realizes that the enemies of the Republic tried to exploit the occurrence to their advantage. Néri excuses himself--and this logically extends to other military personnel--by claiming that his objective was solely a military one: he

fulfilled his duty to the army officers.³⁷ Dantas Barreto states that any real Monarchist conspiracy was disproven by documents in Canudos. However, he is one of those few who refuse to surrender the official justification for this war.³⁸ Soares, convinced that if the fourth expedition failed the very Republican regime would have fallen, still maintains in 1902 that documents discovered later bear out the belief in the Monarchist sedition.³⁹ And in 1961, Dante de Melo's Recolocando a Verdade still credits the political conspiracy theory. Remnants of the conspiracy theory persist despite general Artur Oscar's disclaimer of any real political ties in Canudos. Upon returning to Salvador after the campaign, he clarified that the Monarchism of the Conselheiro was a religious one, "por fanatismo."⁴⁰

Pretense to the "Truth"

The early Republican period was an epoch "not propitious to the truth."⁴¹ However, the express intention of the reporters and the implicit pretense of the military historians was one of objectivity. An unidentified correspondent of the Jornal do Brasil belabours his "higher purpose" (alta missão) of relating only the truth and of publishing only correct information as opposed to the unfounded rumors in the capital, for he was sent to investigate and narrate the truth without personal prejudice.⁴² The specific concern was two-fold: to relate

details on the progress of the war and to dispel the rumors running rampant in Rio. Reporter Silva sarcastically comments from Monte Santo on August 29: "There is no news from Canudos. In compensation, Monte Santo is perfectly ready to rival the [main avenue in Rio]: rumors spring up and proliferate extraordinarily. For days it has gone around that Antônio Conselheiro has received reinforcements. The number of new jagunços differs, in the opinion of some, between 500 and 3,000 . . . It seems that in Canudos everyone knows less than in Queimadas, and there in Rio they know even more than in all of Bahia.⁴³ The further away from the action, the more distorted were the perceptions. Another journalist in Monte Santo, Figueiredo, reported the ridiculous story that Conselheiro wanted to give up but his followers liked the idea of being generals too much so refused to surrender.⁴⁴ The pretense of objectivity and truth breaks down despite any good faith on the part of the writers. However, the reporters seem to enjoy the illusion of objectivity. Favila Nunes, one of the worst offenders of objectivity,⁴⁵ writes: "In my qualification as representative of a neutral newspaper, I do not have nor should I have political [affiliations]; I must be what I am--the personification of neutrality. To see, to hear and to relate is my obligation."⁴⁶

The war correspondents did little to effect a change of opinion about the enemy (opinions which were formulated by

sensationalism in the press) during the war. In any war, propaganda plays a key role as it is one of the most effective weapons against the enemy. It is clear that the Canudos war histories are clouded by oratory--any attempt at rigorous historical judgment is obscured by blaming, praising, cursing, eulogizing--for the issue was (and continues to be) an emotional one.

Patriotic Oratory

The military rhetoric places the Canudos war into the greater context of the history of Brazil and bestows on this particular event special meaning for the nation's concern: the conselheiristas are not just bandits but real threats to the Republic. Much of the writing of the military histories reflects a collective rhetoric. During the campaign the soldiers and journalists shared proximity, communication, and a common enemy, which strengthened the bond between them as illustrated by their united political front and common opinions. The patriotic oratory pervading the literature was a shared one perhaps partially due to the unpopularity of not being a Republican patriot during this time. But it is apparent that the military and war correspondents arrived in the sertão already convinced of their unilateral mission. Some of this rhetoric must be discounted as unconscious, because it was shared. The literature is full of declamatory labels, for example, characterizing Canudos as

collective banditry and religious fanaticism, replete with catch phrases, such as calling for the total destruction of the settlement (reduto) "in the name of order, of civilization, and of morality in Brazil,"⁴⁷ and full of repetitions of the same rationale for fighting, i.e. to prevent the endangerment of the Republican institutions. The rhetoric also contains excessively prejudiced adjectivization and epithets.

The first task is to "name" the enemy. Euclides da Cunha may have been the first to introduce the term jagunço to much of the nation but it was a name used by the military during the campaign against Canudos. Euclides defines jagunço in "Nossa Vendéia" as a primitive type, indifferent to death with a morbid heroism born of unconscious impulse.⁴⁸ Jagunços actually describe the hired gunmen which composed the fazendeiros' personal armies. However, the name was already in vogue in Rio newspapers as a parallel to cangaceiro, having the connotation of an armed bandit without any type of legal status.⁴⁹ Milton clarifies that jagunço was simply taken to mean "troublemaker" (desordeiro) by the soldiers.

Adjectivization

Upon examination of the adjectivization employed in this discourse, we notice the excessive use of epithets. Citations such as "bravo tenente," "dedicado médico" and

"valerosos soldados" we can interpret as less a description of these characters and more an identification, so the importance of the adjectivization is de-emphasized.⁵⁰ In other words, it is taken for granted that the officers are all heroic and the soldiers are all devoted--this belief is shared by all Republican patriots.⁵¹

The same words and descriptions are echoed throughout the literature; the same sentiments and judgments are repeated from one chronicler to another. The following is a composite analysis under a collective authorship. What becomes apparent in reading the history of the Canudos war are the parallel oppositions of a Manichaeian dichotomy. Adjectivization and nominalization juxtapose the two sides in direct opposition under several general concepts. We may name one of them the political paradigm because it concerns the question of legality, which the army represented and the canudenses challenged. The war cry of the soldiers was "Viva a República!," juxtaposed with the conselheirista "Viva o Bom Jesus!" which somehow was also remembered as "Viva a Monarquia!" The collective voice identified itself with the army ("our Army"), the institutions of the Republic (including democracy), and Brazil (only the army forces were referred to as Brazilians in this discourse).⁵² Only after the final siege were there any references to the fact that the jagunços were Brazilians, too. These "legal forces" and "dedicated citizens," with "authority," acted "in defense of

the law," "with the most complete order," "for the re-establishment of legality," "with love for liberty" and "loyalty to the newly-born institutions" in the "fulfillment of their duty."

In contrast to the cause of patriotism and legality, the jagunços were accused of being "insurgents," "enemies of the nation," "alien from society" aligned with "the enemies of the established institutions and exploiters of all order," representing an "inglorious cause." Some labeled them Monarchists; others called them victims of political or Restorationist exploitation, especially after the tides were finally turned against the canudenses. Religion is subsumed under the political paradigm by metonymical association. The canudenses were religious fanatics but this reason alone would not suffice. Hoche voices the nation's paranoia: "Canudos is not, as many people assume, a small nucleus of population that a mere maniac gathered together for religious purposes. Religion is nothing more than a means for which Monarchism is the end . . ." ⁵³ Once again, this turns the issue from a religious to a national concern. These fanatics were "disturbers of order," "fugitives from the law" and "bandits" practicing "illegalities" in Canudos, a "nucleus of rebels and of disturbances" (anarchy, prostitution, uncontrolled robbery and violence), criminals and thieves and a "dangerous fortress." The metaphor of banditry is extended: Canudos

"robs heroes from our Army." Conselheiro had "placed in the balance the fate of the Institutions." The numbers of the rebel chief's sectarians posed the threat of contagion so it was necessary to "extirpate the canker that had settled itself in the heart of the Bahian brush (caatinga)."

Diabolical Imagery

In the religious paradigm, the same dichotomy is extended to the question of morality. The officials and soldiers of the Republic are "Christians," "self-denying humanitarians" with a "generous spirit." There is the highest praise for the army medics, medical students, and volunteers in Salvador who attend to the wounded soldiers. The altruistic "Comitê Patriótico" was hastily formed to help with medical supplies, alimentation, and temporary care of the women and orphan prisoners. The "poor victims of military duty" are buried "mercifully" by their comrades. Others "suffer resignedly" many "sacrifices" and "even in the middle of combat show the generosity of a Brazilian heart"--some even show pity for the enemy.

The military historians do not stop at denying any truly religious foundation to the Canudos movement, they completely pervert the fanatics' intentions. The diabolical association is pervasive: the canudenses were an "invisible legion of infernal furies," an "immensely sinister" "black horde" of "assassins." Conselheiro was a "sinister madman:"

"it could be said that the devil had allied with the villain Antônio Maciel to present him with fancies deserving of his designs...as a bird of prey to throw himself against the Republic and civilization."⁵⁴ Theirs was a "black army" with "perversely cruel bloody intentions" that burned with "satanic pleasure" and allowed their "infernal power to dominate them." War for them was a "human hunt" where they produced a "diabolical rain" of bullets. Since Canudos was a "sinister valley" and "witness to great suffering, of unknown and profound agonies and sorrows without consolation," the "Republican legions" needed to punish them by "bombing the sinister necropolis."

Friar Marciano and the military historians take recourse to mixed Biblical imagery. The diabolical metaphor juxtaposes the image of Canudos as a promised land for its inhabitants, although the friar applies the metaphor with irony. Marciano was the first to introduce into the literature the metaphor of a promised land where no one had to work and where it was believed that the rivers had been converted into milk and the banks into cuzcuz. But this is antithetical to the friar's description of the misery and squallor in the town. He reverses the image by throwing a curse on the settlement as he left hastily and angry. His report, in a way, became the realization of his curse, for the Church sanctified the military action as an "exorcism"⁵⁵ of the devil from a member in order to save the whole.

Barreto alludes to the Biblical metaphor of Babylon and Canaan with sarcasm to refer to Canudos as a "promised land" for its bandits and wealthier inhabitants.⁵⁶ Silva crystallizes sentiments through another Biblical image: the story of Cain and Abel. Here Antônio Conselheiro is Cain and deserves to be punished for the sin of fratricide.⁵⁷

Reason over Savagery

The social question arises when these writers juxtapose civilization and savagery. The Jornal do Brasil correspondent employs a classical metaphor for the contending giants: the soldiers are "Homeric," representing reason as well as greatness, and the jagunços are "Titans," an image that connotes strength in sheer bulk.⁵⁸ The army is associated with reason and civilization in empty phrases such as "civilizing arms." The forces of reason are always superior to instinct, therefore the army must be victorious. In this double standard the "decision" of the legal forces faced the "ferocity" of the jagunços.⁵⁹ Hoche describes Canudos as a "citadel of the representatives of the degeneration of democratic sentiments in American civilization."⁶⁰

The metaphor of savagery and the satanic images are more common during the most intense moments of battle and bloodshed. The passions provoked by witnessing the great slaughter are reflected in the more dramatic tone and

emotional adjectivization. This "vast unleashed horde" of "fiery beasts" with "savage energy" "hunt" their prey from hidden covers. They are no better than animals: they displayed the "fury and ferocity of tigers" that "kill men and animals" alike. The anonymity of invectives like "horde" helps to depersonalize the enemy. The savagery, perhaps caused by the army's actions, gives the military a reason for their aggression.

Heroes and Cowards

The military rhetoric emphasizes the personal qualities of the main characters of this sad drama, eulogizing the admirable behavior of the soldiers and officials while berating the cowardice of the enemy. The writers created myths of their own in relating anecdotes and numerous stories of war heroes.⁶¹ They describe actants aligned with the side of patriotism with superlative qualifications of heroism and bravery. The soldiers bear adjectives like valiant, dedicated, loyal, honorable, energetic, intrepid, worthy. Descriptions such as martial genius, military competence and unequalled conduct associated the military with excellence. The officials are the most likely to bear epithets (for it is presumed that the army leaders are superior to their dedicated men and exhibit an expected intelligence and valor) and more personalized descriptions. For example, the literature denominates them untiring

corporals, valiant commanders of extraordinary bravery; they included the valiant and experienced Artur Oscar and the fearless coronel Moreira César, whose bravery and competence were epitomized in the sentiment veni, vidi, vici.

In contrast, the jagunços are labeled cowards, despite their incredible energy and determination, because of their strategy of warfare. Accustomed to the hardships of the sertão and dextrous in taking advantage of the obstacles nature had offered to the soldiers, the canudenses implemented guerrilla-style tactics. Their strategy was so effective over the Republican forces that it extended the course of the war to four campaigns and almost a year's time. The military vented its frustrations in diatribes against the enemy: the jagunços did not play the game by the rules, they "cheated." Instead of fighting "honorably" like the soldiers and the officers who offered themselves as targets to the enemy,⁶² the jagunços "treacherously" attacked only from the thick vegetation and hiding places of the caatinga. In this way they spooked the soldiers who often referred to the enemy as "fantasms."

In one single quality the two opposing sides are depicted as equal in the literature: their military strength. Pereira de Oliveira refers to the conflict at one point as a "terrific duel of extermination,"⁶³ a sentiment echoed elsewhere. Those writers who were not so embittered as to not see anything positive in the enemy allowed

themselves to admire the jagunços for their tenacity and heroism, even discipline, in battle. The sertanejos were also ready to die in the defense of their ideal, perverse as it may have been, with equal energy: the jagunços "duplicated the intensity of the fire" as "both" sides "combatted with true fury." The jagunço had equally suffered. These sentiments originate not from the journalists but the military participants. The war had been spurred on as a vindication of the reputation of the military who had originally grossly underestimated the enemy's size, strength and commitment. Once the threat was irradiated, the admission of heroism on the opposing side--the jagunços were worthy rivals--not only explains the delay of victory but inflates the prowess of the legal forces--they had overcome incredible odds. The discourse continues in this way to engrandize the army.

The military discourse perceives the army to be the victim and displaces all blame. Some responded to criticism of the army failures with rationalizations, interpreting the retreats (desistências) that concluded the first three expeditions as qualified victories of strategy. Civil authorities were to blame for their mismanagement of the forces and underestimation of the enemy's size. Logistic problems and hardships never daunted the soldiers' will and endurance. An image of harmony, discipline and efficiency pervades the histories, which are contradicted by many

details recorded in some of the journalistic reports and elsewhere.⁶⁴ The behavior of the central protagonist, the army, was consistently "appropriate"--the soldiers were vengeful in battle but generous to the defeated.

Correspondent Silva remarks with amazement that "our soldiers that I saw just a few hours ago turn hateful, wanting to drink the blood of the jagunços drop by drop, aided the unfortunate [prisoners], carrying the sick and seeking flour, dried meat and water [for them]."⁶⁵ The military were ever at a disadvantage yet ultimately were victorious. Cruelties of war were "sad occurrences" unless they were perpetrated by the jagunços, then they were labeled "perversities" and the devastation of the surrounding area was attributed to the Canudos bandits' raids, not to the sacking perpetrated by the soldiers.

Other Techniques

Such devices as adjectivization and imagery are obvious stratagems to persuade the reader to assume the same ideological stance as the writers. There are other, much more subtle techniques to elicit sympathy for the Republican protagonists. Since order in historical narration follows a chronology to imply a cause/effect relationship among events, any disruption of this pattern seems intentional. In Palmeira's narrative the author absolves the Republican forces of any wrong-doing in his selection and omission of

details and in his positioning. First Palmeira describes Conselheiro as a religious leader and suspected criminal who attracted an ignorant following, later adding many rough outlaws. The conselheiristas built a town that was preconceived for defense against attack and supplied it with weapons. The idea of the jagunços preparing for war necessitates the nation's involvement to eliminate the threat: "It was necessary that the constant threat to public peace cease."⁶⁶

Another subtle technique is the strategic use of the passive voice. There are instances in the military literature where a switch from the active voice to the passive is employed to excuse the military troops of their faults or defeats. Soares does this when describing the catastrophic retreat of the third expedition. He writes that the troops "were attacked," "forced to flee," they "found themselves panicked," the survivors "were disbanded," arms "fell into the hands of the enemy," Moreira César's body "was abandoned," then "taken by the fanatics" who then burned it.⁶⁷ This last comment marks a switch back to the active voice to make the jagunços personally responsible for their perverse actions. This literary tactic excuses any dishonorable behavior of the army participants with its guise of anonymity. The enemy was denied credit for their successes in the expression 'we were beaten by them' rather than 'they beat us.'

We can find other strategies these authors used to excuse misbehavior from the military side. One way is simply to minimize it. There are references in the histories and newspaper reports to war time exploitation on the part of the military personnel (e.g. scarce food supplies went to the highest bidder), examples of gambling, desertions, and mismanagement throughout the campaign. These are largely mentioned in passing or not at all; understated and not judged. Only a couple of these writers--Milton and Benício--censured the army's actions, and their writings have not made subsequent editions. Another method is to excuse behavior by explaining the reason for it. We must have sympathy for the soldiers' defeats because, for example, the rumors quoting the few numbers of the enemy were false; the army had not yet recovered from the federalist campaign in Rio Grande do Sul; the sertanejos sabotaged the movement of supplies through the area. The desertions were caused by rampant hunger, says Soares,⁶⁸ and afterward some of the missing soldiers reappeared.

Any act of cowardice on the part of the military is generally depicted as characteristic of certain individuals, thus exonerating the army itself of any faults. Palmeira attributes the failure of the third expedition to the irrational behavior of its leader, as many others do, yet displaces the blame once again by adding that Moreira César was under the influence of a "nervous crisis" (i.e.

epileptic attack).⁶⁹ Coronel Tamarindo takes the blame for the massacre of soldiers retreating during the same expedition, commander Artur Oscar mismanaged the campaign and any scandalous behavior was perpetrated only by individual foot soldiers acting on their own behalf.

War Crimes and Censorship

Only indirect inferences to the fate of the jagunço prisoners exist in the writing of the contemporary military chroniclers and correspondents. The final decimation of Canudos was an explicit command from above (no one actually named the one directly responsible for this), then the jagunço prisoners were gathered together and taken by a detachment of police soldiers from Rio Grande do Sul to a place where their throats were cut. During the previous Republican army campaign against separatists in Rio Grande do Sul, the decapitation of the soldiers taken prisoners was common practice. The difference of moral significance between these two wars was the presence and participation of women and children in the Canudos camp.

The Comitê Patriótico from Salvador took on the duty of caring for and placing the surviving Canudos women and children. Some of these children were adopted by individual army officers but many of them met with misfortune. The issue over prisoners from the Canudos campaign later became an inflammatory one in the discourse of Brazilian

intellectuals, but the military histories, even up until modern times, are significantly silent about the prisoners' fate. The women and children prisoners are "spared", "counted", and "treated humanely" (though the report of the Comitê Patriótico suggested otherwise), but decapitation is not mentioned in the military reports.⁷⁰ After all the bad press about the decapitations in other literature, Araripe denies in 1960 that it had even occurred: "No one knows if record was taken of the jagunços who surrendered, or their fate."⁷¹ Palmeira mentions decapitation as a practice only of the enemy: the wounded soldiers who were unable to retreat with the rest of the first expedition were decapitated and their heads hung from trees in the caatinga.⁷²

There were few references to the prisoners in newspaper reports: Favila Nunes writes on Sept. 25 that jagunço prisoners were collected and put into local prisons⁷³ and on Oct. 19 Lélis Piedade (member of the Comitê Patriótico and author of its Relatório which addresses the prisoners'situation) unemotionally describes the "red tie" ("gravata vermelha" was the common name given to the practice) when three jagunços are taken to the caatinga. He wrote that the prisoners on their way to be killed had criminal faces and expressions,⁷⁴ as if to justify the act. Dante de Melo excuses the army of the "exploitation of emotion" over the prisoners by blaming the two police

battalions who were solely responsible for the decapitations. Besides, "only a dozen cangaceiros and bandits were decapitated."⁷⁵

Many called for the extermination of Canudos under the denomination of "pacification," concluding that this was the only solution. Figueiredo writes, "How do we overcome these people that let themselves be killed stupidly, fanatically, by a liar who proclaimed himself an emissary of God? . . . Only exterminating their idol, exterminating afterwards, one by one, and immediately, setting fire to the den of the criminal Conselheiro."⁷⁶ Soares adds that in war, the existence of either opposing side depends upon the extermination of its enemy.⁷⁷ The military authors believed that the Conselheiro had ordered the extermination of their troops, which necessitated their decision to reciprocate. The necessity of the war was a unanimously held conviction. Even Milton, the army's most severe critic, realizes the Republic's obligation to take action against the risk to national institutions because civil order and the law were necessary. The end was unavoidable and the army's enemies got what they deserved.⁷⁸ Palmeira explains that even if Monarchist Restorationists were not directly involved in the Canudos affair, they certainly did benefit from the demoralization of the troops. Faith in the army was in peril⁷⁹ and, Favila Nunes adds, victory was imperative so to

"teach a lesson to the disturbers of order"⁸⁰ and exorcise the nation's "embarrassment."⁸¹

Notes

¹ After Leopold von Ranke's experiment with "historical realism" describing the past by recording only documentable facts was unsuccessful and generally rejected, historians realized they must deal with the issue of interpretation ranging from the judgement and selection of the data to even realizing that "causal thinking," so vital to the study of history, is in itself "interpretation." Leonard Schultz and Henry Wetzell, Literature and History (Lanham: Univ. Press of America, 1983). That is, historians must appeal to the structure and nuances of narration to 'make sense' of the past.

² Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978) 91.

³ History is never just history "of", it is also history "for," that is, it is written with an ideological purpose and intended for a specific social group. Lévi-Strauss in White's Tropics 104.

⁴ White, Tropics 104.

⁵ White, Tropics 55-6.

⁶ Since historical narration is a ground of mediation of the conflicting claims of the real and the imaginary, according to Hayden White in The Content of the Form (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987) 4, the question revolves not around referentiality as much as around "plausibility," p. 93, which corresponds to the notion of verisimilitude in the novel. This gives history the status of literature.

⁷ White, Tropics 84.

⁸ In the Canudos history we notice not only the patriotic impulse but an illustration of the Latin tendency toward "necrolatry," as Luís Alberto Sánchez characterizes Latin American historiography in his Fundamentos de la historia americana (Buenos Aires: Editorial Americalee, 1943). Throughout the literature we find writers coming to the defense of their relatives, and publishing to exculpate the actions of the previous generation. E.g., Tristão de Alencar Araripe's express intention in writing Expedição Militar contra Canudos (Rio: Impr. do Exército, 1960) is as

a vindication of the soldier hero in reaction to Euclides' so-called "defense" of the sertanejo; Dante de Melo's A Verdade sobre "Os Sertões" (Rio: Edição da Biblioteca do Exército, 1958) uses Euclides' own Os Sertões to defend the army's actions and to attack governor Viana to which the governor's son, Luis Viana Filho responds with a reiteration of his father's self-exonerating clarification in 'A Margem D'Os Sertões (Salvador: Livraria Progresso, 1960). João da Costa Pinto Dantas Júnior, the baron of Geremoabo's grandson, writes to justify his grandfather's part in the war to wipe out the threat of the "den of thieves" who grew in numbers in Canudos in Recordando Canudos (Salvador: Impr. Loreto, 1961).

⁹ White, Content of the Form.

¹⁰ Any narrative, including history, concerns the topics of law, legality, legitimacy and authority, and the more historically self-conscious the writer of historiography--in the Canudos discourse this self-consciousness is not visible until Brazilian intellectuals analyze the Canudos tragedy after the war--the more his or her attention is turned toward the question of the social system and the law sustaining it, the authority of this law, and its justification. White, Content of the Form 13.

¹¹ Although Milton may not have participated in the army's actions, he shares the ideology of the military historians. It is interesting to note that his 1902 history has not enjoyed subsequent editions and has been overlooked in deference to Euclides da Cunha's Os Sertões, which is referred to as the major source for recounting the history of Canudos.

¹² Perhaps we have more literature about the fourth campaign because 1) it was successful and 2) there were fewer surviving soldiers from the previous campaigns.

¹³ See Elísio de Araujo, Atravez de Meio Século (São Paulo: São Paulo Editora, 1932).

¹⁴ Galvão's No Calor da Hora (São Paulo: Editora Atica, 1974) is a comprehensive analysis of the reporting on the Canudos war and a collection of the reports transmitted to the respective publishers of the war correspondents. It is an excellent study with insightful conclusions.

¹⁵ In Galvão's essay "Os Sertões para Estrangeiros" in Gatos de Outro Saco (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1981) 62-84.

¹⁶ José Augusto Cabral Barreto Bastos, A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República (Salvador: n.p., 1975) 4.

¹⁷ White, Content of the Form 191.

¹⁸ White, Content of the Form 39.

¹⁹ Although there had been unheeded calls for forceful action against the "foco de monarquistas" by Bahian journalists in Salvador newspapers since 1893--see Calasans "Canudos Não Euclidiano" in José Augusto Vaz Sampaio et. al., Canudos, Subsídios para sua Reavaliação Histórica (Rio: Monteiro Aranha, S.A., 1986)--friar Marcião's report was the first in the literature to play a pivotal role in the national politics surrounding Canudos.

²⁰ The growing numbers at Canudos were perceived as a threat to the economic and political balance of the coronelista power system of the neighboring fazendeiros. This underlying cause of the war goes largely unnoticed in the military discourse, obscured by more patriotic causes. Only a few mention the threat of congregation at Canudos to nearby properties. Milton admits that the only real threat posed by the Canudos settlement was to property and the fazendeiros; Palmeira, Aragão and Dantas Jr. mention paralyzed work, disruption of progress and eventual "disrespect to property;" and governor Viana in his public addresses called for the extermination of Conselheiro for if he fled, more groups of migrants would be attracted to his sect. Viana maintained a delegate in the Canudos area after the war to assure the maintenance of labor: as a "means of fortifying the work routine in those populations." Mensagem Apresentada à Assembléia Geral Legislativa (Bahia: Tip. do "Correio de Notícias"), April 7, 1900, 5, my translation.

²¹ Araripe, 21.

²² At this point, the canudenses are already referred to as bandits for, as Barreto and Araripe explain, the followers had passed through an isolated and passively resistant stage to turn violent against authorities as a reaction to being attacked at Masseté after burning tax edicts in the public square. Salomão de Souza Dantas calls this their "criminal phase," when they started to raid nearby properties and terrorize fazendeiros and merchants--an obvious threat to "public order." Dantas was a sergeant with a police expedition sent against the conselheiristas at Tucano prior to the Canudos war. See Aspetos e Contrastes (Rio: Tip. dos Tribunaes, 1922) 145-51.

²³ Luciano Carneiro, "Os Conselhos de Antônio Conselheiro," O Cruzeiro (Rio) Dec. 5, 1953: 99.

²⁴ The word used is "acometidos", Viana, Mensagem, March 6, 1897.

²⁵ Aristides Augusto Milton, "A Campanha de Canudos," Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Rio) 63, 1902: 35.

²⁶ Souza Dantas, 147.

²⁷ By the admission of the military, the canudenses always limited their action to their own defense during the war and by so doing they broke no law for it is generally accepted that self defense and the defense of one's own family and home is the "sacred right" of each individual or community. However, in the oratory the conselheiristas' actions are "attacks," "assaults" and they are culpable of the "murder" of their brothers, the "defenders of the law and peace of the Republic." J. da Costa Palmeira rationalizes the army's right to a "retaliation against the Canudos attack on the Republic and its glorious national army" which was, to his mind, especially justified since the behavior of the jagunços was cruel and vengeful, A Campanha do Conselheiro (Rio: Calvinio Filho Editor, 1934) 209.

²⁸ Hoche corresponded with the Rio newspaper O Pais. See Galvão, 457-95.

²⁹ E.g., see "A Representação Sensacionalista" in Galvão, 54-75.

³⁰ The term "terror republicano" was coined by Alfonso Celso, as stated in Araujo, 223.

³¹ Soares, 184.

³² In Galvão, 295. Benício, however, did not enjoy much popularity during the campaign for his sympathizing tendencies seemed to earn him only friction with the final expedition's commander Artur Oscar. Benício was the only reporter to openly challenge the commander and to complain of the censorship of correspondence during the campaign--all transmissions through their telegraph needed the approval of the military command.

³³ Dante de Melo, A Verdade sobre Os Sertões 127.

³⁴ See Walnice Nogueira Galvão's anthology of Euclides da Cunha's publications, Euclides da Cunha: História (São Paulo: Editora Atica, 1984) 76-84.

³⁵ See Galvão, No Calor da Hora 87-89.

³⁶ Milton explains that Conselheiro's intentions were not to attack the Republic but to reinstate certain institutions identified with the Monarchist rule: e.g. religious marriage and the reuniting of Church and State. Conselheiro only refused to recognize Republican authority in reaction to the attack at Masseté after their "insurgence," p. 7. Blaming the Bahian people rationalized the military's mistreatment of the Bahians: during their stay in Salvador soldiers disturbed public order, created conflicts with the local police, assaulted cable cars, invaded homes, and committed violences against their hosts and against women, Milton, p. 95-6. Nowhere else in the military literature does this appear.

³⁷ Antônio Constatino Néri, A Quarta Expedição contra Canudos (Para: Tip. Pinto Barbosa & Cia, 1898) I.

³⁸ Dantas Barreto, Destruição de Canudos (Pernambuco: Jornal de Recife, 1912) 22-27.

³⁹ Henrique Duque Estrada de Macedo Soares, A Guerra de Canudos (Rio: Philobiblion Livros de Arte Ltda., 1985) 48-49.

⁴⁰ Milton, 134-35.

⁴¹ Luiz Viana Filho, 'A Margem d'Os Sertões 46.

⁴² Related in Galvão, No Calor da Hora 228.

⁴³ Cited in Galvão, No Calor da Hora 419, my translation.

⁴⁴ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 411.

⁴⁵ Nunes makes impassioned statements such as "The ferocity of these enemies is unqualifiable. Never has been seen such perversity in Brazilian men. They are the wild beasts of the sertão." This is the reporter who claims to be "the personification of neutrality." In Galvão, 165.

⁴⁶ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 168, my translation. Said neutrality may seem to refer to the political allegiance of his newspaper but it refers more specifically to Nunes' neutrality concerning the issue of governor Viana's politics. This correspondent shares the same formation as the other Republicans and even had a military rank. His "neutrality" stems from referring to Canudos as an "accident"--he thinks both Viana and political adversary Gonçalves were convinced of their own sincerity and that the

Bahian people, suspected of treasonous sympathies, were really honorable patriots.

⁴⁷ Dantas Barreto, Destruição de Canudos "Jornal de Recife," (Pernambuco) 4, 1912, 291.⁵

⁴⁸ In Galvão, Gatos de Outro Saco 74.

⁴⁹ Galvão, Gatos de Outro Saco 74.

⁵⁰ The special structure of epithets is lost in translation from the original Portuguese to English because of incompatible linguistic rules. Many of the descriptions of the protagonists of this collective historical narrative, the soldiers and especially the officials, are epithetical. The positioning of an adjective before the noun it modifies breaks with the normal syntactic pattern of Portuguese and serves as an epithet.

⁵¹ It is interesting to note that Soares characterizes his actors with epithets until one certain moment in his narration that he records as an eye-witness. His tone changes to a more personal one when he mentions his own position during a battle and switches to the use of normal position for adjectives, p. 197.

⁵² War correspondent Barreto, feeling himself far-removed from a familiar civilization in the sertanejo base of operations, remembers hearing some of his colleagues nostalgically comment, "When I return to Brazil, I'm going to . . .", p. 56.

⁵³ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 477, my translation.

⁵⁴ This last quote is from Néri, 115.

⁵⁵ This metaphor comes from José Augusto Cabral Barreto Bastos, "A Ideologia dos Discursos sobre Canudos," thesis, Salvador, 1979, 107.

⁵⁶ Barreto, 11.

⁵⁷ The Republican heroes "pursued Cains that went about leading bandits," Alfredo Silva, in Galvão, No Calor da Hora 415.

⁵⁸ Galvão, No Calor da Hora 229.

⁵⁹ Araripe admires both sides, even though they do not share the same characteristics: "Surprising is the ferocity, combativity and capacity of resistance of the jagunços, ready to die for fanaticism; however, much more surprising

and praise-worthy is the serene decision of the legal forces, always rushing in [on the enemy], despite the huge risks, seeking hand-to-hand combat," p. 212, my translation.

⁶⁰ Hoche, in Galvão, No Calor da Hora 480.

⁶¹ E.g., the legend of cabo (corporal) Roque has been reiterated in the histories up until modern times even though it has been proven to be a false story. Cabo Roque became a hero when he was last seen defending the dead body of commander Moreira César against the approaching enemy in the caatinga after his desperate companions had abandoned it. A street was named after this Republican martyr in Rio. Few acknowledged that Roque was later seen returning to Salvador after the majority of the disbanded troops had already made their way back from the sertão. Milton documents his death to bubonic plague in 1900, 92.

⁶² It was common knowledge that one of the strategies of the canudenses was to aim at the officers over the footsoldiers making it much more dangerous for army officials, some of whom, it is rumored, stripped themselves of any insignia.

⁶³ João Pereira de Oliveira, "Arrancada Heroica," Revista Militar Brasileira (Rio) 1 and 2 (1958): 12.

⁶⁴ Details like reports of army desertions were recorded unjudgingly by the newspapers but ignored or minimized by the military.

⁶⁵ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 443.

⁶⁶ Palmeira, 9.

⁶⁷ Soares, 40-41.

⁶⁸ Soares, 115.

⁶⁹ Palmeira, 128.

⁷⁰ Not even Milton mentions it, which leads us to believe that many soldiers and officers were unaware of what happened or accepted it as a common wartime practice.

⁷¹ Araripe, 276, my translation.

⁷² Palmeira, 54.

⁷³ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 179.

⁷⁴ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 389.

⁷⁵ Melo, A Verdade sobre "Os Sertões" 254.

⁷⁶ Figueiredo in Galvão, No Calor da Hora 456.

⁷⁷ Soares, 191.

⁷⁸ Milton, 147.

⁷⁹ Palmeira, 97.

⁸⁰ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 211.

⁸¹ In Galvão, No Calor da Hora 214.

BRAZILIAN INTELLECTUALS:
THE SCIENTIFIC METAPHOR

In this section we group under the rubric of Brazilian intellectual discourse a homogeneity of ideas on Canudos. Many writers of the period immediately following the "Republican terror" continued their quest for national consolidation through rhetoric instead of military action. The essays, newspaper articles, editorials and senate debates on Canudos consequent to its military "solution" reflect a rationalization for the military action in the cause of nationalism. Despite any heterogeneity of opinion among the contemporary Brazilian intelligentsia, those who wrote on Canudos are largely unified in their search to justify, however subtly, the Republic's part in the Canudos tragedy.

When the stronghold of Canudos was finally taken in October, 1897, and the town leveled and burned, no evidence of any Monarchist conspiracy was found. War correspondent Favila Nunes wrote on October 17 that Canudos was harmless: "Antônio Conselheiro was simply a fanaticizer and lived with his fanatics, . . . exclusively on their own means."¹ The "jagunços" of the military chronicles are no longer described as bandits and aggressors but victims of their religious fanaticism. Since the obstacle to national

consolidation was destroyed, the mission of Brazilian journalists, essayists and politicians in this discourse is to decipher the misunderstood phenomenon of Canudos. Consolidation of a unified Brazil was achieved through genocide. Queries to crystallize what this national unity actually meant replace the battle cries.

The journalists, essayists, politicians and scientists who comment on the Canudos phenomenon belong to a class in transition. The intellectuals who influenced the course of events during the early Republican period were a new force in Brazilian history. The bourgeoisie was an emerging middle class, many of whom came from humble origins, formed within the military or from the business sector. Factions formed, defined through their political allegiance. During these highly politicized times, political affiliation identified a person above all other qualitative labels. One was either Monarchist or Republican, Jacobin or conservative, Florianist (i.e. pro dictatorship) or a proponent of democratic process. These factions opposed each other during the struggle to define national directions. It is apparent in this literature that Republicans, despite their different orientations, were united in a single goal: national consolidation. Once all obstacles to that consolidation, imagined or real, were removed, Republicans could direct their energies toward setting goals for modernization and progress and prescribing

the manner through which they could be obtained. The solution was apparent: science. The contagion of the positivist spirit in Europe and North America had infected Brazil. "Order and progress" had served as the impetus for the victory of Republicanism and positivism was the prescription for understanding the Brazilian situation--the scientific metaphor will serve as the focus for the interpretation of the Canudos phenomenon.

Protest

Long before the publication of Euclides da Cunha's famous Os Sertões in 1902, and even moments before the final destruction of Canudos, we notice the reversal of sympathies in some of the war correspondence and military diaries. Reporters could now afford to be generous and express remorse for the cruelties they had witnessed. After victory the bandit hordes of Canudos become Brazilian heroes: "Brazilian," for they are posthumously granted identification with the rest of the country and given rights as countrymen; and "heroes" since they are deemed to possess admirable qualities in their own right: stoicism and bravery in battle, for example. What was once taken as proof of one's patriotism and "Brazilian-ness"--fighting the enemies of the Republic--is no longer valid. Patriotism must now be defined differently.

Since the status of "Brazilian" is given to the sertanejo, the war must be perceived retrospectively as a fratricide. During the war, reporter Silva depicted Conselheiro as an "evil Cain" who directed fratricidal bullets at the Republican soldiers.² Now this Biblical image is applied non-discriminatorily. Writers create from the Canudos legacy a national complex where brother fought against brother, without labeling any responsible party. The jagunço rebels become "martyrs" in editorials,³ and the label jagunço is replaced with the term sertanejo, now serving as a romantic symbol of Brazil.

Conscientious Brazilians manifested the sympathy they felt toward the "losers" through symbolic protest. On November 3, 1897, students and professors in Salvador, Bahia demonstrated against the army's crimes committed during the war. These Bahian students, cognizant of the actual situation and already sympathetic to the sertanejo, were the first to publicly protest the practice of beheading the Canudos prisoners.⁴ The other attempts to protest these and other contemptible acts of the army appeared in newspapers, political debates, and intellectual writings. The most outrage was caused by the decapitation of the men and even some women and children prisoners by Republican soldiers, done on the command of Artur Oscar, who was acting under order of Minister of War Bittencourt to level the town and not leave "a single stone unturned." This practice was not

reported by the newspaper correspondents during the campaign, and probably censored by the military command, except for an occasional anecdote about the interrogation and slaughter of the captured male prisoner also described by Euclides.⁵ During the conflict only Benício referred to this horrible "practice" while censuring the unnamed individual responsible. Benício's criticisms led to his removal from his position of correspondent before the end of the war.⁶ After relating the details of the execution of this punishment in his diary account, Alvim Martins Horcades relates that he and his medical colleagues were among the first to protest this behavior (supposedly in the field of operations), but he was warned to keep silent, thus suggesting censorship during the campaign.⁷ After the war, it became acceptable and even popular to complain. As early as 1899 Benício lodges his protest in the semi-historical novel O Rei dos Jagunços which brings to light reprehensible acts against the canudenses.⁸

After the war, literature appeared summarily protesting the decapitations and the burning of the settlement. It became a moral issue: Piedade of the "Comitê Patriótico" inadvertently protests the war when he describes in his report the treatment of the women and children prisoners--some were treated humanely but other surviving women were left in the capital destitute or prostitutes, orphans were taken to be used as slave labor, and many ended

up abandoned in asylums, victims of smallpox--nowhere else in the literature do these particular abuses appear.⁹

The intellectuals perceived, without verbalizing it, the illegitimacy of the Canudos war. A few wrote in defense of their sertanejo brothers: an editorial comments that the fratricidal war was provoked stupidly against a guiltless population which heroically defended its homes ("legítima defesa") and whose religious affiliations were protected under the federal Constitution.¹⁰ The illegitimacy of the war was the theme of Wolsey's (pseudonym for César Zama) 1899 Libelo Republicano whose rhetoric absolves the canudenses of any crime or culpability and so invalidates any justification for the Republican "extermination" of a crude ignorant population who was merely exercising its right to self defense. Beyond the moral and legal considerations, Wolsey concludes pragmatically that the war was a waste: of a peaceful people given over to agriculture (which which was especially counterproductive since the Brazilian government was involved in plans to stimulate agriculture); of the sacrificed lives of the soldiers; and of the national treasury.¹¹

The concession among the intellectuals, was that the war was necessary. The claim that the Republic fought an illegal war against Canudos poses a contradiction. The paradox is only apparent. Though the suspicion of Monarchism was debunked, the war could not have been avoided

under the circumstances, maintains chronicler Milton. Arinos notes that the fanatical movement had allowed itself to grow to such proportions that it presented a public danger.¹² Dantas diagnosed that the jagunços could not have been pacified by any but military means because the force of their faith could not be overturned by reason.¹³ Euclides da Cunha also recognized the necessity of the war, and although the military campaign was justified he qualifies this judgement by denouncing it as a crime--the Republic must redeem its destruction of a people ("a people of our pivotal race",)¹⁴ by incorporating these ignorant compatriots into the nation--through open communication between the littoral and the interior, new roads, education and material progress.¹⁵

Displacing the Blame

Euclides da Cunha's Os Sertões, said to be of homeric proportions (Paulo Dantas dubs it "Canudisséia"), was published several years after the war. The success of his essay resides in the fact that it echoed the sentiments of a nation. It marked the culmination of national shame over the Canudos war, following other manifestations of protest among intellectuals, journalists, and academics. Although Os Sertões is commonly known as the nation's "avenging book" ("livro vingador"), Euclides' protest lies only at a superficial level. His explicit intention was to decipher

the enigma of the war, but his implicit and more important thesis was to decipher the enigma of the sertão--the movement and the environment were inseparably bound in the same explanation--so to prescribe a "solution" to the entire "problem".

The real offense that Euclides protests is not the immorality but the barbarity of the soldiers' actions. Employing the image of the slaughterhouse and allusions to butchery, Euclides takes exception to the behavior of the Republican forces he witnessed as war correspondent during the final assault on Canudos. The burning of the Canudos settlement and its inhabitants and the systematic slitting of the jagunço prisoners' throats, Milton describes euphemistically as a "crime of zeal"¹⁶ and Wolsey labels nothing less than cannibalism.¹⁷ But Euclides censures the savagery of these acts. Both sides committed atrocities but the military represented civilization and a superior race so they should not have lowered themselves to the inferior level of the jagunços. The beheading of the prisoners was equivalent to the jagunços' act of hanging headless bodies from the trees of the caatinga. Euclides could excuse the police battallions of sertanejo and gaúcho fighters who were given the bloody task of executing the prisoners because they were products of the same race and environment as the enemy, but the officers who sanctioned this cruelty had had the advantage of years of "civilizing." The army exhibited

primitive instincts in the performance of a "bloody drama of the cave age" and at this stage of history it marked a setback in the civilizing process.¹⁸

It seems these same intellectuals, politicians and journalists who had originally believed in the Monarchist conspiracy theory and then protested the military action after the end of the war sought an appropriate outlet for collective guilt over the massacre. The clergy seemed especially handy as a possible scapegoat through which to disperse some of the blame from the "true" Republicans. Reporter Leal expresses anti-clerical sentiment in August of 1897 when he blames the Church, and especially friar Marciano's mission, for provoking the military intervention. He also traces the conselheiristas' leanings towards a messianic reaction to the behavior of the priests: their absence, their lack of teaching morals and doctrine in an understandable way to the parishoners, and the prioritizing of collection of fees over their duty to perform the sacraments.¹⁹ Benício, self-appointed advocate for the sertanejos, claims it was a conspiracy of the clergy that should be held responsible. Church representatives exploited the conservative spirit of the sertanejos and turned them against the new regime to enlist the populace in the Church's battle against the Republic. Through their propaganda, the priests convinced the sertanejos that the new regime intended to reinstitute slavery of a religious

kind and to end religion ("acabar com a religiãõ")--the new census that was to identify the profession, color, and religion of each citizen convinced the sertanejos of this devious intention. After planting the seed in Canudos the clergy turned against this former ally.²⁰

These writers attribute the cause of this historical event, however, to the ignorance of the jagunços and to omission on the side of the Republicans--they simply did not realize the true motivations of their sertanejo brothers. The same sentiments were shared among many as was the call for investigation into this unfortunate incident "to be studied not only in its tragic eruption and development, but in its deep origins, as a phenomenon of great social importance for the psychological investigation into and knowledge of the Brazilian character."²¹ In fact, comments Afonso Arinos, the war should have been avoided by a scrupulous study of the fanatical movement and of the geographical region where it took place.²² Rui Barbosa, to defend his native Bahia from suspicion of Monarchist collusion, spoke early on about a perceived need to instruct the "invincible ignorance" of the sertanejo and to direct in a positive way the "intuitions of the brutal horde" in the interest of national solidarity.²³ Still, the driving force behind understanding the Canudos enigma is the ultimate goal of finding a solution to the national problem of consolidation and progress.

Euclides answers this call, but many of the ideas Euclides collects and integrates into his Os Sertões were common among his contemporaries. In Barbosa's opinion, Canudos was the product of a primitive "meio"--physical environment--, the violence and promiscuity of primitive instincts, and the superstition of a credulous people, all left uncurtailed by civilizing powers.²⁴ Afonso Arinos wrote "O Epílogo da Guerra" immediately after the defeat of the jagunços which protests on behalf of his Brazilian "brothers" and makes the civilized part of the nation responsible for them--they must be educated. The rest of the nation owed a debt to their sertanejo brothers for it was through their "baptism of blood" that the doors to Brazilian nationality were opened.²⁵ Horcades perceives the separation between the cultures of the interior and the littoral in 1899 when he judges the sertanejos to be lacking in instruction and neglected by an inept government. These ignorant people untouched by civilization were only capable of understanding the Monarchist form of government, they had no idea what the Republic meant.²⁶ Wolsey shared a certain disillusionment with the new regime. An inquiry into the Canudos problem before military action was the duty of an enlightened government. He calls for the redirection of the Republic back toward its democratic ideals. All of these remarks illustrate national sentiments following the war.

The influence that contemporary anthropologist Nina Rodrigues exercised over the interpretation of Canudos, especially over Euclides' Os Sertões, was profound. Nina Rodrigues had been involved in a psychological study of the races to conclude that each race--white, black and indigenous--had distinct biologically determined characteristics.²⁷ Rodrigues examined Canudos as a fanatical movement in which psychological environment and racial disposition played a determining role in the development of their messianism. The Canudos movement was, for Rodrigues, a case of epidemic insanity, caused by sociological factors: the already harsh and violent environment of northeastern Brazil was especially decadent during this period, which allowed a collective neurosis to manifest itself into epidemic hysteria. The canudenses released this hysteria through religious fanaticism. The jagunço was receptive to delirium due to his ethnic background and the "anthropological" characteristics of his racial mixture.²⁸

Race Theory and Miscegenation

Nina Rodrigues explained "scientifically" what other writers had hinted at--that the sertanejos were Monarchist by nature due to their inferior stage of social evolution, and that their limited mental capacity could only comprehend a concrete representation of power and not the abstract laws

of government that the Republican constitution presented. He considered the sertanejos unable to envision a future ideal while dealing with the often negative material changes that the Republic had initiated (e.g. new taxes, food scarcity, etc.). Following this logic, they were incapable of grasping the abstract concepts of religious instruction and were more prone to place their belief in a material divinity. He traced the fetichism of Brazilian Catholicism, which had led the canudenses to believe in Antônio Conselheiro's divinity, to the influence of the inferior races.²⁹

Race theory was not discredited until a later period of history. During Rodrigues' time, however, it served an ideological purpose. It explained both the backwardness of certain sectors of the population as well as the actual dominance of white European races through social Darwinism (i.e. survival of the fittest), thus legitimizing their control of history. Racism was a rationalization for the conquest of peoples. Here, Rodrigues' collective insanity diagnosis scientifically justifies the extermination of the Canudos population. But another problem of national concern is planted in its place. By granting the status of "brother" to the sertanejo, it condemns Brazil to the inferiority of miscegenation.

The "problem" of miscegenation was taken up more fully in Os Sertões.³⁰ Euclides' theory of biological determinism

revolves around the natural sciences. He mixes the metaphor of the zoological sciences with social sciences in explaining that the inequality of social stratification results from the superiority of select races over the lower classes identified as inferior species of men. It is a self-sustaining sophism: the dominant social classes originate from a higher genealogical stratum and this explains their dominance. According to the theory, each race is a species of man developed in a certain physical environment to have specific characteristics. Over time, they may adapt to a changed physical environment. Even cultural aspects like superstition and morality are associated with a physical type and emotional, mental, as well as physical characteristics differ among the ethnic types.

Gumplowicz's "natural law" states that instead of producing a harmonious blend, the mixing of races will produce a mestizo that is retrograde and unbalanced. The mixture always leads to the predominance of the worst attributes of each original contributing race. As Euclides writes, the fatality of this biological law dictates the undesirable results of antithesis, and not the synthesis of its racial characteristics--the mestizo oscillates between the contradictory characteristics, is unstable, and more likely to exhibit the inferior qualities, especially when further aggravated by a challenging environment.³¹

Miscegenation presents a serious problem, especially in early Republican Brazil when the question of self-identification was the priority in the intellectuals' discourse, because national identification with the mixed blood, or *mestizo*, then condemns Brazil to the imbalance and inferiority of its attributes.³² The Brazilian is a complex mixture of variable doses of the original three races: Portuguese, Amerindian, and black African. In theory, the synthesis of the three types would be what Euclides termed the pardo (brown skin) but the situation was complicated by unequal mixes in different regions and the action of different climates on the races, further unbalanced by a constant influx of immigrants. The contemporary push to attract major European immigration into the agricultural regions that could sustain the population was devised to quicken the "whitening" of the Brazilian race. (Logically, since "tropical" Brazil is unlike Europe in climate and geography, to transplant European stock to America would not be an immediate solution according to contemporary theory, for only over long periods would the white adapt properly.) Euclides rejected this solution, because he distrusted any real fusion of the races³³ and also because he sought an original non-European course for his nation. Intellectuals had to deal with the reality of Brazil's population which was in large part a supposedly prejudicial combination of

blood mixtures. Euclides finds a possible solution to this dilemma in his sertanejo.

Euclides presents the sertanejo mestizo as a representative type for Brazil. In Os Sertões he describes the jagunço as an evolved blood mix originating from the stock of the paulista bandeirante who had wandered through the interior of Brazil exploring unknown regions many years before. This paulista mixed with the indigenous curiboca, the most evolved type of the nation's diversity. The sertanejo mestizo is a strong well-defined type not only because of its early infusion of white blood. Through the process of natural selection and the law of survival of the fittest, the harsh yet stable environment of the interior evolved a hearty and resistant stock of flora, fauna and people. The isolation of the sertão had impeded the introduction of other later racial types and mixtures, so the sertanejo type had the opportunity to stabilize any imbalancing features of its racial crossing. Unlike the mulattos of the littoral, who were endangered by their own decadence in the face of the pressures of a civilization they were biologically unprepared to handle, the mestizo type of the interior was instead a retrograde, that is, a throwback to the more positive elements of the primitive races.³⁴ This mestizo showed signs of a tendency toward a completely evolved product, an emerging type with fixed characteristics.

Nature over Nurture

To scientifically attribute strength to the enemy rationalizes the incredible resistance of the jagunço against the Republican army during the war. But Euclides' explicit intention here is to valorize the roots of Brazilian nationality. Euclides rejects the European model to make the sertanejo mestizo a symbol for Brazil. There were, of course, every racial type and mixture of people among the canudenses, as a reading of Piedade's previously mentioned list of prisoners and even Euclides' own section "A Luta" will confirm. But Euclides' mestizo is a theoretical solution to Brazil's identity problem, for the jagunço represents the strength and the capacity of the Brazilian to survive. Apparently paradoxical, however, is Euclides' solution to introduce those "harmful" outside elements to the sertão by consolidating all regions of the nation in a national culture, to the detriment of a stock that survived best through isolation. The dilemma of the ideal Brazilian type is left to be resolved in the future, as Euclides hopes that the sertanejo is stable and well enough suited to accomodate to civilized life.

In an extension of Gumpłowicz' theory of the survival of the fittest as applied to the races, the Canudos war was an inevitable fact of nature as it constituted an example of the elimination of an inferior race within the Brazilian

historical process. The intellectuals perceived the jagunços as blameless victims of their own backwardness for they were an ethnic anachronism incapable of understanding the ideals of the Republic. The Canudos outbreak was, according to Euclides, symptomatic of civilization in the form of the Republic closing in on a retrograde population who, as proven through history, reacted to these pressures with violence. He believed that there exist certain laws of history: the same circumstances will produce a determined result. These "circumstances" include socio-political catalysts acting on race, environment, and psychological factors. One of the psychological characteristics of the sertanejo type was their tendency toward mysticism. The Canudos phenomenon is no longer a political revolt but a fanatical religious movement. For Euclides and other contemporaries, the sertanejos' fanaticism is a mestizo form of religion, a mixture of the credulity thought to be characteristic of all three races. To the fetichism of the Indian and the credulity of the African is added the atavistic contribution of the first Portuguese colonizers, for they arrived in Brazil at a less developed stage in the evolution of the Lusitanian people.³⁵

Influenced by Nina Rodrigues, Euclides analyzes the Conselheiro's role in the Canudos movement as the synthesis of ethnic stratification and environment.³⁶ He is an example of the violence of the nature and social milieu of

the sertão. Euclides' description of Conselheiro, physical and mental, is that of a degenerate. Antônio Conselheiro had inherited not only the imbalance of his mestizo condition but also the insanity in his family--the Maciels had a history of violent feuding and his father Vicente was an alcoholic. Euclides labels Antônio's bad marriage as the specific condition that catalyzed this latent instability into a life of vagrancy. He began to "regress" to the life of a mystic prophet until finally the growing devotion of his followers nurtured his delirium. At this point, Antônio Conselheiro became a self-proclaimed emissary of God, an atavistic type who "gathered in mysticism all the error and superstition of his nationality."³⁷ His insanity was exteriorized and became contagious to the crowds of followers (who were also prone to this mystic reaction under the same circumstances as the Conselheiro).

This mystic or atavistic phase³⁸ was incompatible with the requirements of civilization and more specifically, with the changes of the Republican regime. The sertanejos' antagonism toward the Republic was a natural extension of their religious fervor, for the Canudos movement was an anachronism resulting from the unequal evolution of peoples. In this stage, the jagunço was incapable of understanding the principles of a constitutional government and could only credit a supreme authority. Euclides interprets the war not as a mistake but the logical result of a clash between two

stages in the evolution in history. The jagunço was thus fated to extermination due to his race and fanatical beliefs. This absolves the nation of some of its guilt. The rebellion of the jagunços was indeed a threat to the Republic, the Republican forces were only responsible for misinterpreting the phenomenon.

Dichotomization

Euclides perceived the problem to be greater than just the Canudos context or the contemporary political agitation: Brazil lacked a national unity because it lacked a national identity, a collective psychology, a cohesive belief system, an autonomous culture. (Its cultural heritage from Europe, the indigenous populations and Africa had not solidified together, just as the competing racial characteristics were also in conflict.) In Euclides' analysis of the Canudos conflict, one key repeatedly emerged: the lack of understanding and communication between two independent cultures of Brazil; one superior, the other, inferior.³⁹ There can be no solution to the Brazilian dilemma without first understanding the root of the problem: this dichotomy of cultures. It was inevitable that the two realities, that of the littoral and of the sertão, would eventually clash, and the Canudos conflict was a necessary evil which catalyzed the realization of this dichotomy so that finally a solution to national consolidation and Brazilian

identification could be reached. The fusion of the two cultures that Euclides proposed, however, was actually the subsumption of the inferior but more "Brazilian" culture under the superior yet more European "civilization."⁴⁰

The primitiveness of the jagunço first describes the warfare of the canudenses in the military chronicles. As an extension of the military discourse, even Euclides associated the canudenses with both the anonymity and wildness of animals who acted like a homogeneous mass of instinctual beings: they were a primitive "multitude" victim to a "barbaric mysticism." Their belief in an apocalypse sanctioned the immorality of this "tumultuous clan" living in promiscuity under a "tribal collectivism."⁴¹ Some ambiguity surrounds the application of the term "primitive," however, for we remember that the military writers both admired the bravery and cunning of the "savage" manner of warfare as well as resented the fact that the jagunços did not "play fair." Euclides was also split between the stigma of barbarity of their primitiveness and the force and instinct that the jagunço mestizo exhibited during the campaign. In fact, he rebukes the army for not having adopted the strategies of the enemy. "Civilization" was the privilege of the European. Most specifically, this referred to the material benefits of modernity: the railroad, new roads, communication systems, irrigation, a science of the drought cycles, i.e. the practical

application of modern science. In Os Sertões, Euclides attempts to resolve the problem of barbarity vs. civilization theoretically by endowing the Brazilian mestizo with the potential to ascend to this privileged category.

Euclides expresses a certain ambivalence as he is torn between his own ethnocentricity and empathy for the sertanejo; between the privileged position of his civilized culture and the incorporation of his inferiors into a national whole. The rationale for victory over Canudos was in the interest of national consolidation but the inappropriate response of military action over scientific investigation actually hindered this goal--the facts remain the same but now the role of the sertanejo changes. Euclides' use of the personal pronoun and possessive adjective linguistically reveals his ambivalence. The use of the possessive "our" indicates the importance of national and cultural unity for he uses it to include his sertanejo brothers and sisters in the civilization of the future: Canudos is an emotional drama of our history, he writes;⁴² the Canudos event was a defect of our evolution.⁴³ It also reveals the dichotomy between the two peoples in opposition: when Euclides refers to the military conflict, our identifies the soldiers and describes the contrast between "our way of life and that of those crude countrymen more foreign in this land than the immigrants from Europe."⁴⁴ Yet when Euclides employs the words "us" and "our" in Os

Sertões to include the sertanejo it reveals the patronizing attitude of the intellectual, as the "backward" sertanejos are our people, i.e. to be taken care of and directed by their superiors.

We notice throughout Os Sertões Euclides' ambivalence between including the sertanejo to achieve unity in the country, and his attitude of superiority over these countrymen. His attitude is legitimized by scientific inquiry. Euclides concludes that the purpose behind including the sertanejo is to indoctrinate him in the "better" ways--the modern, more European civilization. In prescribing indoctrination of the sertanejo we can say that Euclides resolves the question of ambivalence between his admiration and condescension in a seminal way by also suggesting that the sertanejos can reciprocally contribute their characteristic strong moral fiber to modern Brazilian culture.

Science Legitimizes Power

Following Comte's paradigm of knowledge as based on experience, science became the agent which gave legitimacy to power. Sevcenko explains that during this period of instability and indefiniton, it became necessary to fix new points of reference through which to study Brazil--science supplied the rules and the laws to which reality could be subjected, measured, categorized and ultimately dominated.⁴⁵

The appeal to science seemed logical: as physical laws govern nature, Brazilian intellectuals would use the same method to uncover the laws which determine human society (and thus understand the religious fanaticism of the sertanejos, for example). Once these laws were discovered, there was hope to control the mechanism that determined this behavior and eventually exercise control over the direction of history. The proposition seemed logical, yet Euclides applies them in a non-synthetic way. Under the auspices of science, nineteenth-century positivism condoned the application of dissimilar fields and their theories to one another.

Euclides' analysis of the Canudos situation borrows from contemporary ideas of many fields, for he practiced eclecticism in scientific theories--he was no specialist in any one area.⁴⁶ His essay is a precursor to the social sciences in Brazil--his ideas are founded on Comte's positivism, social Darwinism, Spencer's evolutionism and Buckle's geographical determinism, as well as Rodrigues' work on race theory. The nationalistic goal of progress toward modernization was inconsistent with the underlying Brazilian tradition of colonialism. We will see that Euclides fails on the textual level to satisfactorily resolve what he perceives as Brazilian reality with his goal of modernizing the country.

Brazil had been colonized by conquest, justified by bringing enlightenment and the material benefits of civilization to the savages. The colonialist mentality of the first Brazilian settlers had legitimized exploitation through the pretext of catechism of the indigenous populations. The justification of European dominance during the contemporary secular society of the Republican period supplanted religion with the scientific precepts of climate, race and civilization, but remains the same ideology.⁴⁷ In fact, the call now was to "colonize" (civilize) the interior of Brazil. The ideology that had justified slavery ever since colonial times was served by the scientific category of the conflict of races, a special type of social Darwinism: through the natural development of the struggle among races, there resulted a social system of masters and slaves. This could be used to explain the division of labor, the functioning of different groups and their stability, relations between individuals and groups, hierarchies, responsibilities, progress, and the cultivation of the arts and sciences, among other things.⁴⁸ So according to this theory, human history is subjugated to natural history, even though Euclides would prefer to believe that people could overcome the fatalism of natural law through efforts in science and the political push for progress.

Antithesis

Euclides attempts to overcome the destined course of Brazil which continues to evolve along the direction of oligarchical power and the conceptual system of superiority and inferiority. Since under this scheme the typical Brazilian mestizo is inferior, this ideology would stymie any true democratization process. So Euclides looks toward modern Europe for answers to Brazilian questions while paradoxically insisting on a rejection of the European model in seeking out the peculiarities of his nation. He takes recourse to European concepts in working out his solution--the scientific categories of positivism--and elaborates a race theory for miscegenation, applies it to Brazil and gives his Brazilian mestizo an aptitude for civilization, another European value. At the same time he rejects and assimilates, negates and affirms, seeks a synthesis and is left with antithesis. This image of antithesis carries over to all aspects of his work.

The rhetorical figure of antithesis is the best suited to illustrate Euclides' difficulty in apprehending a clear directive. His work is wrought with one contradiction after another, on both the epistemological and formal levels.⁴⁹ His scientific thesis, for this term best describes his Os Sertões, is replete with inconsistencies in logic: the description of the sertanejo as a strong race⁵⁰ after Euclides argues that there is no unity of race in Brazil, is

one such example. His proposed solution to national identity found in the mestizo of the sertão is inconsistent with the assumption that the ideal of civilization would endanger the stability of such a type, for the strength of the sertanejo originated from his isolation from civilizing influences. The intellectuals' proposed goal of national synthesis through unity is belied by Os Sertões and contemporary science, which points out not the similarities but the differences between cultures, geography and races in Brazil.

Perhaps the root of the contradiction can be found in the very propositions of the scientific metaphor, and in the case of Os Sertões, Euclides' application of the categories of science to the Brazilian reality to which he served as eye-witness. Euclides started from fact--his experience of Canudos, to generalization--the theories he researched, and never resolves the contradictions between scientific authority and his eyewitness testimony. Euclides' use of the scientific metaphor works from the paradigmatic function (i.e., he attempts to comprehend reality by imposing categories), but ignores the more syntactic function which deals with scientific process. Euclides sees the effect and seeks the cause, but he fails in establishing a syntactical relationship between the two. His contradictory affirmations expose the weakness of his arguments. He tries to totalize from a fragment. Euclides pieces together too

many fragments from different approaches and thus fails to assimilate his cause with his result.

To carry the problem of synthesis further, one image that surfaces in the discourse of the intellectuals is the scientific metaphor equating the country to a biological organism. Some have compared the fanaticism of the canudenses to a cancer infecting the health of the nation. Fortes, for example, imagines Canudos to be a "national tumor come to the surface."⁵¹ The sickness at Canudos which originated from a mentally unbalanced leader spreading his epidemic neurosis to his followers and aided by the catalytic interaction of the environment threatened contagion to other parts of the nation. The journalistic and military chronicle attacks on the enemy "fanatics" was the first attempt at applying an "antidote" to the sanctification of the Conselheiro.⁵² But during this period of a more conscious search for balance within the organism, the appeal was to science to find a cure for the nation's ills. So the Canudos "amputation" was justified as a necessary recourse in the interest of the whole organism. This was only a partial "cure," however, because we see that the goal of synthesis was not achieved logically or epistemologically in the intellectual discourse. Euclides' opposition littoral vs. sertão is not directed toward synthesis of the two but the subsumption of the sertão,

which he fails to validate beyond inferior status, under the superior modern culture.

Future Solutions

The Brazilian intellectuals of the early Republican period were faced with the challenge to project the myth of homogeneity, as Sevcenko writes, "of order in the future from the present chaos, of an ethnic type representing the nation,"⁵³ if only symbolically. Olímpio de Souza Andrade sees it as a question of looking beyond the Republic and the other political divisions to retain a solidarity from the past to the present, to impose order on the Republic and direction through civilization and progress without brutality. The key is the future. We know that Euclides prescribes the indoctrination of the "strong race of the future"⁵⁴ into the enlightenment of civilization. But his concept of history is an idealistic one--a linear projection of progress in which the mystic or primitive elements of Brazilian society would evolve into the rational or civilized.⁵⁵ But he is pessimistic because his Brazilian racial type is only a promise of the future, if it is at all possible--this would depend on the amount of time permitted the evolution of an autonomous national life.

Piedade prescribes more than just progress for the population of the interior, he tempers it with morality: "For the rustic populations of the countryside there are two

great elements that will improve them: the word of God and the whistle of the locomotive."⁵⁶ Oliveira in Beatos e Cangaceiros adds to Euclides' solution of social and material reform with concrete suggestions. He writes in 1942 that existing conditions which led to both fanaticism and banditry in the Northeast must change, first by obligatory primary education, second, by introducing the army into the sertão to maintain order and guarantee effective justice, third, by conscription of the sertanejos to integrate them into the national armed forces and fourth, by federalizing the judiciary system to make it independent of state control, and so with these modifications to stimulate civic pride and conscientious voting. In any case, whether Euclides' initiatory program is called merely a possibility or the destiny of Brazil, the national ideal must lie in a future utopia due to the belief in the detrimental effects of miscegenation.

The European Metaphor

Euclides broached the question of the appropriateness of applying the European solution to Brazil. There has been much debate over the issue of whether Brazil has copied Europe or only borrowed from the European model. Roberto Schwartz in "As idéias fora do lugar"⁵⁷ discusses the transition from the slavocratic state to capitalism in Brazil where structures actually remained much the same in

the new patron-client system of modern Brazil. His thesis is that the intellectuals looked toward European and U.S. models, (nations where their own systems allowed for the proper functioning of the ideals of capitalism, liberalism, and ideals of universal freedom, for example,) to adopt these concepts in Brazil without an appropriate ideology which would justify their existence. Renato Ortiz maintains instead that intellectuals such as Euclides da Cunha adapted those parts from the European model that were suitable to their particular circumstance, and so Euclides chose in his eclecticism "appropriate" ideas for his contemporary Brazil.⁵⁸

Sevcenko contributes to this argument in an interesting way when he points out that the stimulus behind the intellectuals of this period consciously searching for national affirmation was the flood of European immigration to Brazil which ignited a subliminal fear of those European nations with expansionist tendencies. Defensive reaction to this then necessitated rejection of everything European. But Brazil was founded on European expansionist doctrine and as Europe was modernized, Brazil continued its dependence on European ideas and institutions for its own patterns--the formation of the Republic on liberal ideas was one such example. However, Brazil was more slowly evolving due to differing historical circumstances, and also because the early settlers to Brazil were transferred to the new land

during the more feudal stage of southern European development, as compared to northern European countries. As much of Europe progressed rapidly through its capitalist stages, Brazil was out of sync with the development of Europe but continued to try to "catch up".

As accepting or rejecting Brazilians may be of the European model, they are still Europe's creation in many ways and cannot succeed in escaping the European model at least as a point of reference, for the dominant sector in Brazil was formed in the European ideology.⁵⁹ The early Republicans referred repeatedly to Europe and North America. The inadequacy of their European scientific theories in this discourse stems not solely from the misapplication of these "out of place" ideas ("fora do lugar") but to the intrinsic error or ideological boundedness of the original theory.

To summarize, this discourse expresses a collective guilt over the "genocide" of Canudos. This was handled in various ways. Some preferred to place the blame on certain factions--the military were criticized not for mistaken action, for the war continues to be justified as an amputation of the cancer of fanaticism, but for their inefficiency during the campaign. Certain behaviors were chastized--Euclides denigrates the primitive instincts of the military personnel who performed the decapitation of prisoners: this task had been assigned to the gaúcho

battalion, mestizos who were allowed to exhibit their so-called natural propensity toward barbarity. A few blamed the Church. The Monarchists were not absolved because though they had not remitted aid and arms to the enemy, they were accused of manipulating the situation to their own advantage. Everyone was blamed except the true Republicans. No one pointed a finger at the propaganda of the Republican press which had launched a "Republican conspiracy" of their own. Their protest was merely symbolic. The Republican intellectuals were as much products of their own ideological formation as the sertanejo was deemed to be a product of the sertão. The motive behind studying the Canudos movement was more than to remember the "tragedy;" it was to put that unfortunate incident behind and learn a lesson from it. The lesson, supported by manipulations of positivistic science, revolved around the European concept of superiority which legitimized the past, present and future direction of Brazil in supporting the same power structure that the bourgeoisie intended to overcome--colonialism.

Notes

¹ Walnice Nogueira Galvão, No Calor da Hora (São Paulo: Editora Atica, 1974) 223.

² Galvão, 415, 434.

³ Galvão, 102.

⁴ E.g., see Afrânio Peixoto, Livro de Hora (Rio: Agir, 1947) 207-10.

⁵ Euclides da Cunha, Os Sertões (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1985) 531-33.

⁶ Galvão, 113.

⁷ Alvim Martins Horcades, Descrição de uma Viagem a Canudos (Bahia: Lito-Tip. Tourinho, 1899) 113-14.

⁸ Manuel Benício's novel mentions the slitting the throats of the prisoners, the shooting and slaughter of the women and children who surrendered, and also recounts that coronel Teles saved 50 jagunço families by accompanying them to Bahia without consulting his superiors, O Rei dos Jagunços (Rio: Tip. do "Jornal do Comércio," 1899) 402.

⁹ Lélis Piedade, Histórico e Relatório do Comitê Patriótico da Bahia (Bahia: Lito-Tip. e Enc. Reis & Cia., 1901).

¹⁰ Dec. 22, 1897, O Comércio de São Paulo, in Galvão, 104.

¹¹ Wolsey, Libelo Republicano (Bahia: Tip. e Enc. do Diário da Bahia, 1899) 52.

¹² Alfonso Arinos, "Campanha de Canudos" in Obra Completa (Rio: MEC, Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1969) 645.

¹³ Salomão de Souza Dantas, "Criminosos e Ordem Pública" in Aspectos e Contrastes (Rio: Tip. dos Tribunaes, 1922).

¹⁴ Da Cunha, 559.

¹⁵ Euclides writes that it was "indispensable that the Canudos campaign had an objective superior to the senseless task of destroying a town of the sertão. There was a more serious enemy to combat, in a more deliberate and dignified way. That whole campaign would be a useless and barbarous crime, if we did not take advantage of the roads opened by the artillery for a rigorous propaganda, continual and persistent, aiming to bring those crude backward compatriots up to our time and incorporate them into our ways." My translation, Os Sertões, 499.

¹⁶ Aristides Augusto Milton, "A Campanha de Canudos," Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Rio) 63 (1902) 132.

¹⁷ Wolsey, 36.

¹⁸ Da Cunha, 538.

¹⁹ In Galvão, 81-4.

²⁰ Benício, 156-59.

²¹ Afonso Arinos, on Oct. 9, 1897, in Obra Completa, 644, my translation.

²² Arinos, 644.

²³ In Galvão, 96.

²⁴ In Galvão, 97.

²⁵ Arinos, 99.

²⁶ During a so-called civilized period of evolution, Horcades continues, when science was at its peak such horrible acts should not happen since even in ancient and unenlightened times, embryonic civilizations would have only confiscated the goods of the defeated. The military had acted even more barbarously and criminally than the jagunços, 104.

²⁷ In his 1894 publication, As Raças Humanas e a Responsabilidade Penal no Brasil, Raymundo Nina Rodrigues concluded that since the black African race was intellectually inferior to the white race of European origin, the penal code in Brazil should be modified for blacks because they were not equally responsible for criminal acts to the extent of the "superior" races. See the section on Nina Rodrigues in José Augusto Cabral Barreto Bastos' "A Ideologia dos Discursos sobre Canudos," (Salvador da Bahia, 1979) 71-84.

²⁸ See Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, As Coletividades Anormais (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1939), especially pp. 44-49.

²⁹ After the final assault on Canudos the body of the Conselheiro was exhumed, his head was removed and sent to Salvador to be examined and measured by Rodrigues, who found no abnormalities in the cranium which should have disqualified his thesis of brain dysfunction, but he instead justified his error since the normal cranium "proved" his diagnosis of chronic delirium as a product of systematic evolution--Conselheiro had inherited the bellicose nature of the mestizo. Rodrigues, As Raças Humanas, 133.

³⁰ Euclides discusses biological determinism and miscegenation in his "O Homem" section of Os Sertões. See especially pp. 141-62.

³¹ Da Cunha, 174-76.

³² Euclides even applies his theory of biological determinism to explain that the uncontrolled patriotic passion of contemporary Brazilian history stemmed from the interference of Brazil's miscegenation to culminate in the collective insanity of the "Terror Republicano." Os Sertões, 321.

³³ See Da Cunha, 143-44.

³⁴ Da Cunha, 177.

³⁵ Da Cunha, 198-200.

³⁶ Da Cunha, 206-30.

³⁷ Da Cunha, 227.

³⁸ Da Cunha, 247-49.

³⁹ Benício is much kinder to the sertanejo--he prefers to counterpose the knowledge of the civilized with the wisdom of the "savage": he describes the sertanejo tracker as a "crude man, ignorant, [who] through the experience of the almost wild existence that he bears in the sertões, extracts from a futile and insignificant fact which would have passed unperceived by anyone else, a succession of faithful deductions, transforming the fact to a reality that the logic of the civilized person would never achieve....The women also possess this same almost divinatory intuition that develops from the necessity of the environment to which they are adapted . . ." My translation, in Galvão, 302.

⁴⁰ It is important to keep in mind the qualitative difference that the concept of "civilization" had during the late 1800's. At that time, it connoted certain impractical European styles of dress, aristocratic manners, positivistic scientific ideas and certain material improvements. It was this type of "civilization" that rendered the military posture against Canudos most ineffective--the soldiers wore impractical uniforms and were slow to adapt their strategies to the strange terrain.

⁴¹ Da Cunha, 246, 247, 234, 237.

⁴² Da Cunha, 284.

⁴³ Da Cunha, 375.

⁴⁴ Da Cunha, 249.

⁴⁵ Nicolau Sevcenko, Literatura como Missão (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1983) 85.

⁴⁶ Euclides adapted elements of positivism but did not adopt the whole philosophy as, in the opinion of Cruz Costa, in his Panorama da História da Filosofia no Brasil (São Paulo: Cultrix, 1960), he reflects the eclecticism of a culture which has never been given over to a doctrine. Perhaps this is why some critics view the contradictions in the discourse of these Brazilian intellectuals as consistent with the contemporary lack of a clear national identity and thus adequate for their time.

⁴⁷ Nelson Werneck Sodré defines for us what is meant by 'colonialist ideology:' It is the "network of ideas and concepts that, generated and developed with the colonialist expansion of the Western European nations, attempted to justify their dominance directly or indirectly, manifesting their destinies by territorial possession or...economic supremacy. It developed with the mercantilist phase and was consolidated with the process that finally placed capitalism as the predominant mode of production, continuing into the current imperialist phase." My translation, A Ideologia do Colonialismo (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1961) 133.

⁴⁸ Arivaldo Fontes, "Antônio Conselheiro no Riachão do Dantas," Momento (Aracaju) 2, 3/4 (Aug.-Sept. 1977): 7-9.

⁴⁹ There is likewise a formal duality between the sections of Os Sertões devoted to the analysis of nature and its abstract types--"A Terra" and "O Homem"--and the novelization of "A Luta" in which Euclides dramatizes the events of the war with heroic images and dramatic anecdotes, for it is clear he is conscious of writing to posterity both as a scientist and a historian. In each section Euclides' description contains oxymoronic imagery (e.g., the sertanejo is a "Hercules-Quasimodo") as his style is also oxymoronic for he confuses events with hypotheses and his characters with abstractions--e.g., Moreira César is identified with epilepsy and the Conselheiro represents atavism.

⁵⁰ Remember that for Euclides, the sertanejo represents a uniform type, originating from a mixing of paulista and Indian ancestry, but stabilized after years of isolation. Da Cunha, 171.

⁵¹ Herbert Parentes Fortes, Euclides: O Estilizador de Nossa História (Rio: Livraria Clássica Brasileira, 1957) 94, my translation.

⁵² Maurício Vinhas de Queiroz, Messianismo e Conflito Social (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1966) 104.

⁵³ Sevchenko, 85.

⁵⁴ Da Cunha, 25.

⁵⁵ Dante Moreira Leite, "A Psicologia Social de Os Sertões," O Estado de São Paulo, (São Paulo) 22 Jan. 1966: 7.

⁵⁶ In Galvão, 370, my translation.

⁵⁷ Chapter in Roberto Schwartz's Ao Vencedor as Batatas (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1977).

⁵⁸ Renato Ortiz, Cultura Brasileira & Identidade Nacional (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1985).

⁵⁹ Europe is always a point of departure for Latin American critics whether they prefer to copy or reject that model--Sevchenko describes the writings of Brazilian intellectuals on their reality as ambivalent or having a polarized attitude: they are called reformist if they borrow from Europe and salvationist if they reject everything European due to a perceived threat from expansionist tendencies, p. 85.

THE DISCOURSE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Canudos phenomenon has been examined in its messianic context in the discourse of the social sciences. The ideas on Canudos in this discipline have evolved throughout the years, with the currents of change in anthropology, sociology and political science. Here we will describe these interpretations, then conclude with some questions involving the epistemological groundings of this discourse.

Early Ideas

The portrayal of the Canudos movement and its leader Antônio Conselheiro has evolved with the currents of change in the social sciences, but it originates with the ideas of Euclides da Cunha and Nina Rodrigues. Nineteenth century science operated on the principles of its time and relied on scientific logic to uncover patterns that might suggest laws which govern human behavior. Rodrigues applied psychological analysis to Conselheiro and his followers here to "prove" that their specific behavior was traceable to biological and environmental "laws."

Rodrigues' psychological analysis of the Canudos movement concluded that Conselheiro was, like other

historical millenarian figures, a megalomaniac. In this way, Conselheiro fits Norman Cohn's mold of paranoids obsessed with delusions of grandeur. These paranoids eventually suffer persecution complexes to later shift their subtle tactics of persuasion to the use of brute force.¹ Rodrigues patterns the Conselheiro's progressive psychosis in three stages. The first is the nomad stage: from a relatively stable life of family provider, Antônio Maciel's life became complicated with financial difficulties and the end of an unhappy marriage when his wife ran away with another man. This is when he experienced a transition to a life of asceticism. The second is the messiah stage when he followed a career of abstinence, fasting, preaching and hallucinations, gaining more and more authority over the populace, and began to believe himself another Christ capable of performing miracles. The final is the persecution phase when his religious delirium associated the new Republican government with religious persecution and even the antiChrist. His delirium was passed on to his followers, according to this conversion hysteria theory. So the megalomaniac role of the leader and the sertanejos' psychological conditioning in a violent and sterile environment explains their misguided expression of faith. The sertanejos' mixture of races and physical environment influenced leader and followers to express the mysticism and credulity already characteristic of their nature.

Rodrigues employed Conselheiro's biography as a metaphor to explain what happened at Canudos. These same ideas, however, are perpetuated in later literature.² In Beatos e Cangaceiros, Xavier de Oliveira concludes that the existence and acceptance of such common religious types as the beatos,³ the penitents and even the conselheiros in the sertão, attest to the pervasive environment of mysticism. Oliveira blames the environment for the phenomena of beatismo and banditry. Illiteracy, the non-intervention of the police, the lack of work and possessions, and the law of force describe some of the circumstances which created criminal or vagabond behavior. Nertan Macedo also depicts the beato of the sertão as a religious vagabond, a misfit welcomed by the Church because of the good works he or she performed. The beatos would habitually make themselves needed and gather a following until one day they would take to the road.⁴ But the beato, as Pedro Calmon explains in 1959, replaced the absent priest as spiritual leader⁵ in a situation where any recourse through normal channels of authority were cut off to the sertanejo and religion was the only consolation to a difficult life. Antônio Conselheiro was not an uncommon character and apparently was following the example of a famed predecessor, the missionary Ibiapina who had renounced a career as a judge to preach and guide his people.

Abelardo Montenegro in the late 1950's continues in the same tradition in both História do Fanatismo Religioso no Ceará and Antônio Conselheiro, describing the psychological predisposition of the sertanejo to fanaticism. He traces their fanaticism to the nature of the sertanejo type, as well as the influence of physical and cultural environment which spawned ignorance and mysticism. For Montenegro,⁶ the sertanejo is incapable of abstraction and can only understand the spiritual through the material: "Of a rudimentary intelligence, the peasant or sertanejo is not capable of elevating himself to the abstractions of dogma. He anthropomorphizes, materializes and is necessarily inclined toward concrete things. From this comes the election of a man whom he judges exceptional to be the object of his cult."⁷ Therefore, the canudenses attributed divine powers to a mortal, Conselheiro. He was the catalyst of their revenge on a social system which marginalized them without recourse to justice, working in conjunction with a religious institution which had instructed them to accept their lot with resignation. The sertanejos' faith was then a defense or balm against their difficult circumstance, and "fanatical" movements provided the only means acting outside the complacent Church to express this desire for better living conditions by imagining in their charismatic leaders the power to improve the sertanejos' earthly lot.

Vlademar Valente, in 1963, clarifies these same issues in his own way. He claims to reject the "primitive mind" theory but explains the manifestation of mysticism as attributable to the level of a culture. Valente writes that even a high level of culture can be mystical, but contradicts himself by saying that certain mental factors leading to a disposition toward psychopathy and an ecological imbalance make a people receptive to mysticism. Add to this a moment of desperation or dissatisfaction and people take recourse to a belief in magic to resolve impossible situations. These writers appeal repeatedly to factors of psychology, environment, culture, race and family history, to underline the naturalness of this phenomenon--fanatical movements are the product of the nature (physical and social) of the sertão.

Breakthroughs

Nineteenth century theories of race and climate in Brazil would later be replaced with the social concept of culture as determining the differences among peoples. Brazilain ethnographer Gilberto Freyre, a student of Franz Boas' historical particularism, served as a bridge between the early and more modern interpretations. Rather than debunking the judgement of superiority/inferiority in relation to differences between populations, he believes differences to be the result of cultural instead of racial

characteristics. Freyre's trilogy (The Masters and the Slaves, The Mansions and the Shanties and Order and Progress) examines the evolution of Brazilian society as an extension of the psychological characteristics of the original three races that make up Brazilian society. His opinion of the Canudos movement suggests that it had a profound social direction and significance, but as representing the violent clash between the cultural extremes of the Europeanized urban littoral and the archaic pastoral sertão, a dichotomy parallel to that of Euclides.⁸ In The Masters and the Slaves, Freyre attributes the backwardness of the interior to the feudal forms of economy and the isolation of the population; the cause of Brazil's "evils" or decadence was not miscegenation or barbarity, but slavery and monocultural economics.

In Freyre's study of Brazilian psychological traits, he valorizes the interplay between race, culture and social environment, for he insists race displays both conditioned qualities and predispositions that may be subjected to the influence of social environs. That is, race is a biological and socio-cultural category. In this approach non-climatic environmental factors such as diet and nutrition form part of the cultural configuration. Freyre's criterion of "superiority" is measured by a culture's adaptiveness in specific circumstances. The emphasis on culture over ethnicity switches the focus from the nature of the

bio-organism to man's adaptability to the environment. In Order and Progress Freyre concludes that Brazilian society has developed along a patriarchal structure and form, and he applies this structure to explain Brazil's inequality among regions, classes, races, cultures, and the variety of social orders under the national system.

In his trilogy, Freyre returns to the same topics that obsessed the early Republican intellectuals in their search for national definition, but he focuses on race in a positive, not apologetic sense. Freyre's Brazil enjoys the benefits of the harmonious and reciprocally beneficial blend of races: "Hybrid from the beginning, Brazilian society is, of all those in the Americas, the one most harmoniously constituted so far as racial relations are concerned, within the environment of a practical cultural reciprocity that results in the advanced people deriving the maximum of profit from the values and experiences of the backward ones, and in a maximum of conformity between the foreign and the native cultures, that of the conqueror and that of the conquered."⁹ Such an image of unity in diversity (and the "whitewashing" of history) constitutes a national myth of harmony and democracy which helped change Brazilians' image of Brazil and is still perpetuated in more modern literature.

Because of its human component, the pretense to predict or control future behavior as in the objective of the

physical sciences was discarded in later analyses.¹⁰ Some have claimed that the human subject is too complex a factor to extract deterministic laws of human behavior, thus absolving the social sciences of the responsibility for making predictions even if they succeed in explaining social phenomena. One can only hope to gain some understanding of human behavior in specific circumstances. From this realization came the universalizing strategies of functionalism and structuralism, which borrow from the precepts of linguistics as applied to culture.¹¹

Lévi-Strauss' structuralist theory allows a change of attitude toward the stigma of the "primitivism" of one culture as compared to another. Lévi-Strauss denies the evolutionary process in culture and rejects the concept of the superiority of certain cultures, for in structure and mental process both magic and science are parallel except in function. Thus in the analysis of the Canudos movement of some modern social scientists, the less ethnocentric concept of relativism replaces the stigma of "fanaticism" and the issue of racial characteristics. But the first task is to define and categorize. Each author uses a slightly different model to classify religious cult movements, but most agree that Canudos was either a messianic movement, a millenarian movement, or both. In establishing such categories, the Canudos movement is placed into a metonymical relationship with other sect phenomena.

A Question of Defining

In much of the literature, Canudos and other Brazilian movements follow in the millenarian tradition, like the more conservative Judeo-Christian religions, embedded in a millenarian ideology which interprets the millenium as the collective, terrestrial, miraculous salvation that will totally transform life on earth.¹² Millenarian "movements," however, add the element of the imminence of such a transformation.

Conselheiro's messianic category varies slightly from one interpreter to another--there seems to be some confusion in the interpretations between the association of Antônio Conselheiro with the "messiah" figure, i.e. a divinity returned to earth, and the "prophet" who merely announces and prepares men for the return of the true messiah. Weber defined the messiah figure as the reincarnation of a divinity or hero whose presence places his people in a privileged position. The messiah surges from within active and dynamic religions where the god figure is superior to mortals, in order to command men to perfect their imperfect world through the messiah's mediation between the divine and human realms. The political, social and economic objectives which are to effect this utopia are religiously achieved through rituals revealed by the messiah.¹³ Canudos interpreter Veríssimo de Melo defines messianism succinctly

as a collective movement under the inspiration or command of a charismatic leader aspiring to install a paradise on earth and to transform the established order. The new order at Canudos had both religious and political connotations, Melo points out, as it began as a religious movement, but became politicized when it challenged the "established" order, taken to mean the new Republic.¹⁴

A common theme throughout the analyses of religious or cult movements, whether they be nativistic, acculturative or revitalistic,¹⁵ is that they are a reaction to chronic societal stress. The movements' purpose is to regain the lost equilibrium in either regressing to an idyllic past or inventing a perfect new society. Wallace (1956) appeals to the organic metaphor for human society under distress: according to the principle of homeostasis, the organism will preserve its own integrity by maintaining a fluctuating life-support matrix for its individual members in times of stress. Society is one central functioning unit made up of interchangeable parts, but when damage is threatened to a major part or the whole during periods of abnormal disorientation, the organism will take emergency measures to preserve the constancy of the matrix.¹⁶ Veríssimo de Melo includes such moments of extraordinary stress in Northeast Brazil as periods of drought and extreme hardship.¹⁷ Sue Anderson Gross (1968) narrows the moment of undue stress to the breakdown of the Monarchy to the Republican system,

times of especially disruptive droughts, antireligious transformations and civil wars, all of which describe the period involving the Canudos movement. These extreme circumstances were catalysts acting in conjunction with the normal social instability of the Brazilian interior, marked by poverty, oppression, insecurity and feuding. In a secularly closed society such as the sertanejos', religion becomes the only culturally accepted manner to solve social problems.¹⁸ Sylvia L. Thrupp (1962) and René Ribeiro (1982) disagree with the undue stress theory. They deny the necessity of grandiose political, social or economic change for messianic hope to arise when the dominant world view of the target culture already incorporates the belief in a cataclysm or apocalypse. The esthetic appeal of a perfect age and the human need for renewed dramatic experience is sufficient to seek out new types of leadership and social relationships.¹⁹

Among Canudos theorists there is a debate between characterizing the Canudos movement as reformist or revolutionary in nature. E.J. Hobsbawm concludes from his study of archaic forms of social agitation that all millenarian movements are revolutionary in nature. He distinguishes between reformists who accept the general framework of their society but consider it capable of improvement, revolutionaries who insist on a fundamental transformation or replacement, and conservatives who

transfer their hopes to final liberation upon death. Hobsbawm maintains that some millenarian movements may become conservative but that these movements are revolutionary with the peculiarity that they expect the revolution to make itself, by divine will.²⁰ Peter Worsley finds cults to be revolutionary, especially those with a millenarian doctrine, because they reject the old traditional values replacing them with new practices. The destruction of items symbolizes elements of renunciation: in the rejection of everything Republican, the canudenses were commanded to burn Republican issue currency in a symbolic act.²¹

Patricia Pessar (1981) argues that the Conselheiro's movement was a rejection of new (Republican) institutions, not traditional values.²² Therefore it would be more appropriate to categorize Canudos as reformist or conservative. Cohn notes that in the Middle Ages (and by extension, semifeudal Brazil) a population normally seeks redemption from crises through the recognized authorities. When these, however, are found to be corrupt, people turn to Church reformers such as preachers and hermits (or Brazilian beatos) who sometimes preach a radical religious message but whose intent is to reform the existing institutions, not necessarily to destroy or replace them. Vittorio Lanternari finds that "neo-Brazilian" movements were not antiCatholic but antiChurch, opposed as well to certain social

institutions such as latifundismo and mandonismo (local bossism). Antieclesiasticism does not connote antitraditionalism. Pereira de Queiroz (1965) also rejects the characterization as revolutionary or subversive because Brazilian rustic movements function to reinvigorate the old traditional values and patterns in decay. The goal is to return to the proper functioning of the social relations of an ideal coronelismo under which the followers would live pacifically and efficiently.²³

Dichotomization

Euclides' Os Sertões was the first serious attempt to understand the Canudos phenomenon according to the categories of the human sciences, and it initiated a trend which was to endure even after the problems of Northeastern Brazil were redefined in more modern, culturally-oriented studies. Euclides reduced the Canudos conflict to the violent encounter of two non-syncretic Brazilian "cultures:" the progressive civilization of the littoral and the backward barbarity of the interior. Even after the contributions of structuralism and functionalism in anthropology, Euclides' dichotomy of cultures translates into a dualism perpetuated in more modern interpretations. Just as the sertão symbolized backward barbarity and the littoral progressive civilization, anthropologists use the categories of "primitive" and "advanced" culture, "rural"

and "urban" society, "backward" and "modern" world, to underline the foreignness of one culture in relation to another, even within nations.

Rodrigues first viewed Canudos as a messianic reaction to the threat of foreign domination--the nativist interpretation of today--because the advances of Republican progress disrupted the life style of the conservative sertanejo society. Cult movements were traced to "primitive" peoples for, as Worsley explains, the societies prone to this type of reaction lacked advanced technology and scientific knowledge and so allowed the acceptance of fantastic explanations of natural phenomena and to employ magic to solve problems.²⁴ Modern interpreters reiterate the old standard of primitivism under different semantic categories. Cohn explains that the "backward" societies are prone to millenarian movements because the moment of apocalyptic struggle for the equality and justice of the millenium occurs when the more primitive culture is challenged by modernity. The target populations are desperately poor and technologically backward societies suffering from dislocation and disorientation due to their problematic transition into the modern world.²⁵ Lanternari plays a lexical game when he translates this dichotomy into modern and primitive cultures. He calls the "primitive" a culture of the ethnological level, i.e. a people without a recorded history. Thus the "civilized" culture is a

historical one.²⁶ Lanternari maintains that though each order of culture has a parallel continuity, there is no true dichotomy or fracture between them. But the (primitive) cult movements must be understood on the ethnological level--another device to underline the problematic inherent in each of the discourses under examination: the difficulty to speak for a folk population which cannot or is not allowed to speak for itself.

In his ethnography, Jacques Lambert interprets the idea of coexisting dualistic structures of Brazilian society as a socio-economic division. Both societies share all other characteristics--a common religion, language, nationality, history and consciousness of solidarity. But Lambert's "two Brazils" (Os Dois Brasis) are divided in evolution by different systems of economic and social organization which impede any real unification. The division strays from the littoral/sertão geographical boundaries but is no less an ideological concept as Euclides' was, for it serves as justification for the status quo. Lambert's "old society" is an underdeveloped archaic one, isolated and marked by colonialism where most exist in a relation of dependency to the feudalistic hierarchical patronage of the plantation owner, and whose lives are characterized by deficiency--a lack of wealth, social mediation and education. The other society, the país novo, is the later but much more rapidly developing one, initiated by the European immigration of

this century, with the new methods of agriculture and increased industry which it stimulated. It includes both the urban and rural proletariat and the middle class grounded less in the paternalism of interpersonal relationships and much more in the impersonal and profit oriented system of marketing and production.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen's "Seven Fallacies about Latin America" disputes the supposition that in Latin America there exist dual societies in conflict, feudal and capitalist, but rather that the urban areas exploit the agricultural areas under the mercantilist theory. With the absence of a substantial middle class, the backward areas of Latin American countries operate like internal colonies of the metropoli. His revision, stressing the relationship between the two sectors, places responsibility for social action back on modern society.

Brazilian sociologist Pereira de Queiroz (1965) determines the duality of structures in Brazil to be between the archaic rural patterns of the interior and the urban industrialized European culture of the littoral. The Brazilian littoral has not been prone to messianic reactions because its society has enjoyed more stability than the interior. Evolving from the more constant rhythm of plantation life, its stability has permitted the structures and social organization of the littoral to develop in relative order. So the Brazilian messianic movements are a

phenomenon of the "rustic" populations. They arise during the transition from a more primitive to a more modern economic-based society when the former feels incriminated upon and threatened by the latter. In the case of Canudos, the threat was represented by Republican institutions and its new demands on an archaic yet previously balanced system.²⁷

Despite different attempts to illustrate the schism between Brazilian societies, the more modern theorists discussed here overall do not challenge Freyre's myth of harmony between the races and social democracy. They subtly reinforce rather than contradict his idea by isolating other factors such as economics or cultural duality to obscure race and color lines as determinants in establishing social status.

Coronelismo

For Pereira de Queiroz in O Messianismo no Brasil e no Mundo, messianism is not possible without the pre-existing condition of kinship, though this is not the cause. Couple kinship with a tradition of myth or religion where the sacred serves as a metaphor for the social, and messianism can function in a utilitarian way to (re-)achieve the goal of the well-being of that society whose health is threatened with disruption. The family group, however that group may be determined in each culture, is predominant in primitive societies and societies-in-transition. The interior of

Brazil belongs to the second group and the family metaphor is used to explain how coronelismo and the favor system of sertanejo society function in a parallel way to the individual family.

The sociology of coronelismo functions as a social contract between a network of family, friends and allies. There are two components to the system of coronelismo: filhotismo (nepotism), or the favor system that benefits family members, dependents and allies, and mandonismo, the persecution of one's enemies to maintain one's power. The penetration of mandonismo guarantees such things as vote falsification, the disorganization of local public services, and the practices of patrimonialism, favoritism and nepotism in politics. Vítor Nunes Leal explains that when the Republican government granted constitutional power to the states and autonomy to the municipalities, the political domination of the coronel and local boss would be strengthened as they exchanged their voter support for favors from state candidates.²⁸ Valdemar Valente adds that under the overwhelming control of political bosses and landowners the individual was forced to cling to a clan or special group for survival, and since religion was the outlet for congregation for protection against these bosses, the charismatic leader filled a void left by the absence of Catholic priests.²⁹ Religion for Valente was an outlet of social vindication against coronelismo.

Under ideal circumstances, the coronel is the patriarch of an extended family and although he maintains sometimes whimsical dominance over his laborers, he is responsible for protecting them in return for their deference. These are traditionally established relationships of unwritten contracts and alliances, and though marked by undemocratic extensions such as nepotism, favoritism and sometimes violence, this is implicitly viewed as a relation of reciprocity and not domination and subordination. The latifundist would supply land, loans and material goods in return for the loyalty and the vote of his dependents--each party mutually benefitted, and the landowner's need for greater numbers for labor and votes to strengthen his power guaranteed limits to his despotism. Society condemned infraction of these alliances by either party. Maurício Vinhas de Queiroz insists that when the solidarity of the patron-dependent relationship breaks down, e.g. when the rural master fails to protect those under him, no loyalty is owed and the traditional ties are invalidated.³⁰ This is the moment when, according to Roger Bastide, messianism becomes an option in a society suffering from exaggerated stratification.³¹ Patricia Pessar describes the cultural expectations of messianic leadership as parallel to that of the patron for he fulfills the responsibility of assisting his followers materially and spiritually. The tradition of beatos, penitents and prophets was legitimized by the norm

dictating the provision of charity to those determined to have divine gifts, and these would in turn redistribute the charity. The devotion deferred to the messiah figure completed the reciprocity of the relationship. However, Pessar adds, the messiah's procurement of material needs subjugated him to another (non-spiritual) patron, which involved him and his group in the political system of parties in the local and national scene. It is in this way that movements like Canudos were subjected to the mercy of large political and economic forces that they consequently rejected.³²

This seemed to be a tenuously balanced system vulnerable to abuse. New relations through marriage, Pereira de Queiroz explains in O Messianismo, sometimes eroded the cohesion of a family group into splintered pyramids, and feuding among clans resulted. The continual process of destructuralization and restructuralization of families produced a state of instability. This process of "anomie," as Pereira de Queiroz labels it, was manifested not only in feuding and consequent reduction of the male population, but also the disorganization of the traditional family through customs practiced since slavery and the fetichism of masculinity which sanctioned polygamy. The behavior of some of the clergy who had forgotten their vows of poverty and chastity compounded the degeneration of familial structure when they raised illegitimate children

without being defrocked. All of these circumstances particular to Brazilian rustic society wore at conservative values: messianism connoted a return to the sanctity of the family unit.

Pereira de Queiroz shows the kinship of family to be a dominant paradigm within the religious discourse of the Conselheiro's movement. Not only were the Canudos inhabitants composed mostly of families who would then attract an increased following due to more extended kinship ties, but their messianic community was conceived of as a big sacred family whose leader Conselheiro was the patriarch. Fraternal relations among the adepts were endorsed. The patterns of internal behavior were determined by both religious and family values: punishment was enforced for crimes against religion (drunkenness, robbery, failure to appear at communal prayers) and the standard of behavior followed precepts affirming the sanctity of the family unit (prostitution was prohibited, free love was condemned and marriage imposed on cohabitating couples). In the Canudos settlement family life was fortified in its regression to the normal practices of the rustic environment.

Shepard Forman agrees that in Brazilian messianic movements the structure of the newly conceived societies affirms instead of contradicts the traditional social order which is hierarchical and authoritarian.³³ Antônio

Conselheiro is at the vortex of a pyramidal hierarchy and commands over a select group of "apostles"--the secondary chiefs and members of his Guarda Católica, whose responsibility was to protect and defend the religious leader. Each chief served a particular function: Antônio Beatinho was in charge of religious duties; João Abade was commander in war; the merchant Vilanova brothers administered financial matters; the Santa Companhia organized the cooperative of laborers and welfare system. The elite were distinguished on the basis of their religious faith and the Conselheiro was extreme authority over all social ranks.

Folk Catholicism

Forman's contribution to the patron-dependency theory introduces certain modifications. Patronage reaffirms, legitimizes and justifies the authority of the landed class "masters" over their "slaves" or dependents and the assymetry of economic exchange between them. Forman's economic interpretation is expanded to include a third category, that of peasants. These comprise former slaves, mestizos, Indians and whites who are marginalized and undefined as a class or social category. They fill the void of internal production left by the Brazilian monocultural system and share some dependency on the cultural system. When the peasant or dependent is abused within this

relationship, Forman has found that they will not fault the system itself but will seek a new patron. Since the religion of the peasant, folk Catholicism with its cult of saints, also requires submission to authority and obligations to meet debts in the reinforcement of patron-dependency, rural protest may manifest itself in the sacred realm. Messianic movements satisfy social demands left unmet elsewhere with the breakdown of this relationship while reaffirming the dependency status of peasants in what Forman calls the "politics of despair."

Symbolic anthropologist Patricia Pessar works from Forman's patron-dependency theory to develop the most complete theory of folk Catholicism and its salvation ideology. Pessar defines folk Catholicism as the symbol system dominating the dialectical process by which political institutions are produced and maintained, reproduced, and transformed by the people guided by meanings inherent in cultural symbols.³⁴ She takes a cultural approach to the relations between models of secular and sacred power in Brazilian folk society. Since the European conquest of the Americas, salvation ideology has justified Latin American colonialism as it has also fostered resignation of the oppressed to await vindication upon death. In rural Brazil the millenarian view of folk Catholicism as an awareness of the inevitability of the apocalypse was a real part of the culture, reinforced by the Bible, the preaching of the

missionaries in the interior, and the presence of the Missão Abreviada. These perpetuated the belief that increasing alienation from God through sin would precipitate the appearance of the antiChrist, the sure sign of the impending cataclysm.

Brazilian folk Catholicism, Pessar explains, parallels the secular patron-client relationship therefore it also easily serves to replace the traditional system when it is disfunctional by redefining it in the sacred realm. The same norms of reciprocity and cooperation of the Brazilian patronage system--the assymetrical exchange of produce, labor, military support, loyalty and credit for protection and the use of land; and intraclass cooperation and reciprocity marked by labor exchange, barter and charity among peasants as a coping mechanism--also govern the popular cult of saints. Belief in the divine power of retribution legitimizes the imbalance of wealth and exploitation of the masses in secular society. Natural or human disaster is for them a divine punishment for the transgressions of the individual protesting his lot instead of complying with the acceptance of divine will. Such punishment signals the failure of the individual or community to fulfill their duties--such as denying the saints their obligations, prayers, charity or thanks--in the exchange of reciprocity and cooperation. In times of unusual hardship, however, the folk populations fault their

patrons for failing in their responsibility to protect the peasants. They direct their hate against the transgressions of the elite as the community collectively calls forth the approximation of the owed divine punishment in the millenium. The community identifies the responsible party, perceived to fulfill the social role of patron, with the antiChrist as a fulfillment of the expectations of the peasants awaiting the prophesied apocalypse. The millenium provides a framework for an inversion of meanings--in Canudos, the Monarchy was identified with the law of God and the Republic with the law of Satan. The Monarchist position was not political but ideological for, as Duglas Teixeira Monteiro elucidates, it represented a return to a more ordered time, when the possession of land was perceived to be within the peasants' grasp.³⁵

Historicist Approach

Ralph Della Cava (1968) disagrees that a bipolar dichotomy existed between the rural and urban spheres. He takes a historical approach in his analysis of the Juazeiro and Canudos movements. The complications that led to both movements arose because of the relations between the littoral and the sertão. Canudos was tied to the political and religious institutions of the Monarchy and with the transition to Republic, felt the effects of the changing

national economy. His interpretation examines the Canudos movement within the context of the national scene.

The historicist approach is unlike the other orientations in that it considers each event in its individuality. In historicism, to explain the social, economic and political conditions surrounding an event is to explain the phenomenon and justify its existence. Della Cava insists that Canudos is better understood as a political and social development within a specific historical period of Brazil when certain national structures were emerging. Conselheiro's was a popular religious movement intimately tied to national ecclesiastical and political power structures. The religious climate at the time was riddled with decadence--the Church reform of the 1860's with its re-education of priests and missionaries was moving toward correcting the corruption with a concerted effort toward spiritual revival. The hegemony of the revivalistic Church was threatened--the threat originated from the urban areas with their influences of Masonry, positivism and Protestantism. Rebuilding churches served as an outward sign of this renewal, therefore the legitimizing of beatos and their practical function could only aid in this trajectory.

Antônio Conselheiro played a political as well as religious role in the national scene for he wielded power due to his charismatic attraction and influence over the

labor force which was an important resource in the interior. His increasing power only subjugated him more and more to national affairs as a pawn to both the coronel and the curate. Conselheiro was exploited in the context of the factionalism between rival Bahian political parties, the Vianistas and Gonçalvesistas, and by the manipulations of the clergy who were unsympathetic to Republican reforms. Conselheiro lost Church support after he became a rival to the priests over popular support and was successful in evading their control by wandering from place to place. In the political climate of the burgeoning Republic and Conselheiro's condemnation of its ideology, the ambiguity of his actions led to the interpretation of his movement as a real political Restorationist threat.

Deprivation Theory

The underlying issue of land reform, which is not fully developed until the 1950's with the Marxist revision of the history of Canudos, serves as a foundation for the deprivation theory of social protest. Some interpreters privilege the poverty and oppression felt by the lower classes as impetuses to revolutionary action against the elite. Vinhas de Queiroz traced a link between prophetic movements and social insurrection in the face of collective deprivation. Messianism is the most likely alternative in a community where religion is a viable ideology but it

expresses the same implicit desire of the oppressed classes to topple the system of economic exploitation and political domination of coronelismo.³⁶ Yoko Akabane (1983) agrees that the Canudos fanaticism was a manifestation of protest against socio-politico-economic conditions in the sertão and that Conselheiro fulfilled a social function in direct relation to this--his role as leader was secondary to the spontaneity of his following reacting out of desperation. Canudos' "primitive communism" was a defense against the brutal exploitation of latifundismo. Manuel Maurício de Albuquerque (1981) adds that all other options at this time--immigration, employment, land ownership--had been closed to the sertanejo.³⁷ Moments of social tension create desperation when underprivileged groups have no institutionalized means to confront the powerful "enemy" so must obtain their culturally determined satisfaction in the hope of utopia. Religion serves as the recourse to their oppression for only in the supernatural can be found the means to achieve what is denied them. (Many of these same ideas will be fully developed in the following chapter.)

Evolution

To summarize, a certain evolution in the interpretation of the Canudos phenomenon is evident in the discourse of the social sciences. Monteiro calls the model of the early ethnologists, Rodrigues and his ilk, "naturalistic:"³⁸ the

interplay between biological determinism and climate and physical environment is backdrop to explain the pseudo-psychological theories of collective delirium. Later when society and culture are privileged over the earlier deterministic mechanisms, we see the development of social structural interpretations that examine the social, economic and political system of coronelismo as the model for explaining relations of domination and subjugation. Some conclude that Brazilian cult movements are a rebellion against coronelismo, for others, they are a redefining of the same structures. Simultaneous to this interpretation, the historicists identify the social, historical and political conditions of the Brazilian context to conclude that the movements react to national developments on a scale greater than they could control so both isolation and reform are rendered ineffective.

Epistemological Considerations

The premise that links Conselheiro's movement with other movements, Brazilian and non-Brazilian, is its definition as a messianic and/or a millenarian movement. The accuracy of these denominations however is problematic. We may assume that any religious cult growing out of a Christian ideology is inherently millenarian due to the very precepts of the Bible. Most of these analyses accept that Canudos was a millenarian movement in the sense that the

followers actively awaited and prepared for the apocalypse, some would assume, to come in the year 1900. Some even attribute "Sebastianist elements" to the movement which establishes the manner in which the apocalypse was to have come to pass. All this stems from the publication of a prophecy in Os Sertões that Euclides had found recorded in different notebooks among the rubble in the destroyed settlement. It is interpreted as Conselheiro's prediction of forthcoming signs of the approaching Day of Final Judgement:

In 1896 thousands of flocks will run from the sea to the sertão, then the sertão will become the sea and the sea will become the sertão.

In 1897 there will be much pasture and few hoofprints and one sole pastor and one sole flock.

In 1898 there will be many hats and few heads.

In 1899 the waters will turn bloody and the planet will appear in the east with the rays of the sun that the sphere will confront on earth and the earth will confront someplace in the heavens . . .

There will be a great rain of stars and in that place will be the end of the world.

In 1900 the lights will go out. God said in the Gospel: I have a flock that wanders outside this sheepfold and it is necessary that they reunite because there is only one pastor and only one flock!³⁹

The authority and origin of this document is questionable since it cannot be attributed to Conselheiro. The possibility also exists that there was some popular

identification between legends that already existed and the historical figure as in the confusion of Antônio Conselheiro with his patron Saint Anthony: "From the heavens came a light / that Jesus Christ sent. / Santo Antônio Aparecido / from punishment freed us."⁴⁰ Validity is credited to popular belief surrounding the story of Canudos in the interpretation of the social sciences and rigorously documented research is lacking. With the lack of evidence, the real nature of Conselheiro's utopianism--traditionally Christian, apocalyptic or communistic--is inconclusive.

Euclides' prophecy continues:

In truth I tell you, when nations battle
nations, Brazil battles Brazil, England
battles England, Prussia battles Prussia,
from the waves of the sea Dom Sebastião will
come with all his army. From the beginning
of the world that he enchanted with his whole
army and resuscitated in war.

And when he became enchanted he plunged
his sword in the stone, it entered up to its
hilt and he said: Goodbye world!

To the next century you will not arrive!
...⁴¹

The association between Dom Sebastião and Jesus Christ as redeemer recorded by Euclides in the preceding lines has helped to perpetuate the unquestioned, almost unconscious, identification of the Canudos movement as Sebastianist or as having "Sebastianist elements." The obvious Sebastianism of a few other Brazilian cults⁴² has permitted the synecdochal

relationship characteristic of this discourse to freely associate the return of Dom Sebastião and his armies with the assumed resurrection of the Conselheiro to defeat the antiChrist-Republic. Canudos may be referred to as Sebastianist in its broad significance: the collective belief in the coming of a redeemer capable of miraculously changing the order of reality to institute a regime of peace and happiness--i.e. synonymous to messianism. In its literal sense it designates the return of Portuguese king Dom Sebastião to earth to avenge the nation's enemies.⁴³ Many note the presence of sebastianism throughout the sertão as a tradition but do not specify its relation to or deny its role in the Canudos movement.

The problem of "slippage" between the borders of legend and fact continues in the polemic of the social sciences between the positivist trends to establish a goal of objectivity, and hermeunetic interpretation which prefers to work from a discourse level, thus diminishing the need for empirical validation. This problem arises from the nature of the phenomenon of popular belief, which is the aspect that the social sciences deal with. The target of most of these interpretations is the legend of Canudos and not the historical signifier.⁴⁴ Thus, reconciliation of historical data and social theory is averted. Instead it is the phenomenon which grew out of Conselheiro as socio-cultural product which is significant: this includes the corpus of

belief surrounding Conselheiro the miracle-worker held by those sertanejos who did or did not know him, present-day sertanejos who still entertain belief in their "redeemer," and the image of Conselheiro the legend perpetuated in both scientific and fictional literature. Interpreters have ascribed to existing prophet theories to help explain the incredible loyalty and unshakeable faith that sent a population to self-destruction, to explain the fact that Conselheiro's closest followers waited three days before burying his body in hopes he would return to life, and to rationalize vestiges of modern popular belief in the return of the Conselheiro.

Notes

¹ Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972) 176-77.

² Up until 1963 we can cite examples of interpretation centered on genetically and environmentally determined insanity, criminology and mysticism--in Cesar 1939; Menezes 1950; Valente 1963; and the most recent biographies of Conselheiro--Montenegro 1954; Dantas 1966; Macedo 1978--judge the Conselheiro to be a product of his psychological, social and genetic environment.

³ The beato is defined by Xavier de Oliveira in Beatos e Cangaceiros (Rio: Tip. Revista dos Tribuaes, 1920) in a non-sympathetic way as "a celibate type that took a vow of charity (real or apparent), that does not have a profession, because he quit working, and that lives on the charity of good people and his exploitation of the faithful. He spends the day praying in churches, visiting the sick, burying the dead, teaching prayers to the credulous, all in accord with the precepts of catechism," 39, my translation.

⁴ Nertan Macedo, Antônio Conselheiro (Rio: Editora Renes, 1978) 126.

⁵ Pedro Calmon, História do Brasil (Rio: José Olympio Editora, 1959) 1997.

⁶ Abelardo Montenegro's História do Fanatismo Religioso no Ceará (Fortaleza: Editora A. Batista Fontenele, 1959) returns to the metaphor of the contemporary intellectuals treating the fanaticism of the northeasterners as a disease, and calling on democracy, technology and the secularization of society to "immunize" against religious fanaticism, 72.

⁷ Montenegro, 58.

⁸ In Order and Progress, Freyre cites Canudos as a movement to reaffirm conservative values under the Monarchy which was an extension of the Cult of the Father (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1986) 101.

⁹ Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1978) 83.

¹⁰ See William Bechtel, The Philosophy of Science (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988).

¹¹ For an overview on the evolution of the social sciences, see Marvin Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968).

¹² Cohn, 15.

¹³ See Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, O Messianismo no Brasil e no Mundo (São Paulo: Dominus Editora, 1965) 27-29.

¹⁴ Veríssimo de Melo, "Informação sobre Messianismo no Nordeste," Revista de Etnografia (Porto) 14, Nos. 2, 28 (July 1970): 333-34, 345.

¹⁵ See F.C. Wallace et al, "Towards a Classification of Cult Movements," Man, 59 (Feb. 1959): 25-28.

¹⁶ Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, 58 (1956): 264-81.

¹⁷ Veríssimo de Melo, 346.

¹⁸ Sue Anderson Gross, "Religious Sectarianism in the 'Sertão' of Northeast Brazil," Journal of Inter-American Studies, 10, 3 (July 1968): 369-83.

¹⁹ René Ribeiro, "Brazilian Messianic Movements," Comparative Studies in Society and History (Hague) Suppl. 2 (1962): 65.

²⁰ E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1959) 12.

²¹ With the debate between contextualizing it as revolutionary, reformist with regressive or progressive tendencies, or even conservative, we can reach no conclusions about the nature of the Canudos movement. Instead, this serves to illustrate a problematic of hermeneutic interpretation, i.e., its hermenetic nature. Some interpret the Canudos movement as reformist not because of any verification of evidence, but rather due to a series of associations made to fit this particular phenomenon into a mold elicited from studies of other movements.

²² Patricia R. Pessar, "Unmasking the Politics of Religion," Journal of Latin American Lore, 7, 2 (Winter 1981): 266.

²³ See Pereira de Queiroz, 216-329.

²⁴ Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound (New York: Schocken Books, 1968) 239.

²⁵ Cohn, 285-86.

²⁶ Vittório Lanternari, As Religiões dos Oprimidos (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1974) 12.

²⁷ Pereira de Queiroz's generalization is inconsistent with her appraisal of the Canudos situation, however. According to her individual analysis of Conselheiro's movement, Canudos was a messianic and not a millenarian phenomenon, as the town of Canudos itself was perceived to be an earthly paradise. The canudenses attempted to realize their utopia on earth through a restoration of the religious principles consistent with the Brazilian "rustic" culture. Their organization would bring the inhabitants closer and closer to their utopic ideal as its inner dynamics responded with constant modifications to the changing circumstances from the outside social environment. The Canudos movement was not a reaction against the threat of domination by outside influence but a result of the decadence within the sertanejo society, i.e. of a process of "anomie."

²⁸ Víctor Nunes Leal, Coronelismo, Exxada e Voto (São Paulo: Editora Alfa-Omega, 1986) 80-88.

²⁹ Valdemar Valente, Misticismo e Região (Recife: IJNPS, 1963) 21-22.

- ³⁰ See Vinhas de Queiroz's study of the Contestado movement, Messianismo e Conflito Social (São Paulo: Editora Atica, 1977), especially p. 45.
- ³¹ In Veríssimo de Melo, 346.
- ³² Pessar, 255-77.
- ³³ Shepard Forman, The Brazilian Peasantry (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975) 205-6.
- ³⁴ Pessar, 274.
- ³⁵ Compare Douglas Teixeira Monteiro's treatment of the Contestado movement in Os Errantes do Novo Século (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1974), especially pp. 109-11.
- ³⁶ Vinhas de Queiroz, 249-52.
- ³⁷ Manuel Maurício de Albuquerque, Pequena História da Formação Social Brasileira (Rio: Graal, 1981) 530-33.
- ³⁸ Monteiro, 12.
- ³⁹ Euclides da Cunha, Os Sertões, (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1985) 223, my translation.
- ⁴⁰ Da Cunha, 241, my translation.
- ⁴¹ The last line reads "Até mil e tantos a dois mil não chegarás!" Euclides, 223, my translation. Carlos Chiacchio in "Euclides da Cunha: Aspectos Singulares," Jornal de Ala, (Bahia) 11 Jan. 1940, documents in its entirety this prophecy as Euclides copied it in his notebook as war correspondent and published it in Diário de Notícias, Bahia, 6 Nov. 1897. This prophecy is noticeably reminiscent of the Santa Pedra and Pedra Bonita movements of Pernambuco in the earlier 1800's in which sebastianism did play a major role.
- ⁴² Pedra Bonita is the perfect example--the followers of visionary João Antônio dos Santos believed that with human sacrifices they could hasten the disenchantment of Dom Sebastião to champion their realization of paradise and distribution of wealth by supernatural means.
- ⁴³ Historical figure Dom Sebastião had disappeared in the battle of Alcacer-Quibir in north Africa on Aug. 4, 1587. His body was never recovered so this historical-turned-legendary figure came to be a cultural hero. The phenomenon culminated in cult movements surrounding the belief that he would return one day bringing happiness and wealth to his people. But the prophecy of a

returning king pre-dated the time of Portuguese king Sebastião. A shoemaker, Gonçalo Ares Bandarra (1551-1623) of Trancoso, Portugal wrote enigmatic verses about an unseen king that would win a war for his people. The sources of his ballad are many. During the period of Dom Sebastião the unstable climate in Portugal seemed ideal for the proliferation of messianism so the lost national hero was interpreted to be the king of Bandarra's prophecy. Prior to that (1530-1540) and contemporary to earlier messianic uprisings in the Metropole the idea was transplanted to Brazil with the first colonists. So the tradition envisioned the return of a national redeemer but did not specify to which king or nation it referred. "Sebastianism" does not necessarily denote the resurrection of the Portuguese king.)

" In the interest of a universalizing function of the social science discourse, the reconstruction of developments in Canudos generally lack the rigor of critical historical research. The problem of validation revolves around a void left after the destruction of an entire community; reconstruction of what happened at Canudos must to a large degree be a projection. Because of the historical nature of the Canudos phenomenon, the modern social scientist, like the historical researcher, must exercise critical judgement in verification to avoid adopting the same ideological positions and historical misrepresentations transmitted in his or her sources.

MARXIST DISCOURSE: REWRITING HISTORY

Although the existence of pre-socialistic "tendencies" in Canudos may have been intimated by previous authors beginning with Euclides da Cunha,¹ the theme of land reform has not been developed until recently by materialists. Marxist interpretation operates under a specific ideological basis which privileges economic relations over the social or religious considerations expounded by other sociologists and anthropologists.

The expressed intention of the Marxist interpreters of Canudos is to rewrite its history so to understand what they see as the real issues involved. Their interpretation faults a system based on the power of the latifundia. The Marxists consider Canudos to be a populist reaction against that system with the implementation of land reform. We will examine the arguments and corresponding rhetorical techniques developed in this particular interpretation.

A Question of Ideology

We need first to distinguish the use of the term ideology in this section, since the Marxist analysis itself involves considerations of what constitutes "ideology." In this chapter we will be referring to the materialist

interpreters as pertaining to a Marxist "ideology" or model through which all information is filtered. Althusser identified ideology as inseparable from the coherent system of all human activity. It is present in language, economic production, politics, social institutions, individual actions, aesthetics and morality.² Within the Marxist class theory model, "ideology" is described as one of the products or superstructures of a social system at whose base lies the mode of production. This type of ideology functions to assure the dominance of the ruling classes and induce the dominated classes to bear exploitation.³

There is an inherent paradox involved in this particular discourse. The Marxist interpreters of Canudos allow a phenomenon to be seen only as a necessary result of a historically determined set of circumstances. All evidence is interpreted to conform to the precepts of Marxist historicism and materialism. The paradox here is that the Marxist interpreters must project their own "ideology" on another time and place so as to discover what was misinterpreted by historically and ideologically bound participants in the Canudos event. They presume the participants would not have been aware of the origin of their own motivations. So one historically and ideologically bound set of writers must show another such set the error of their thinking.

Class Conspiracy

Rui Facó was perhaps the first to represent the character of the Canudos problematic in terms of the Marxist concept of class struggle. Since Facó started to publish his material in the late 1950's, a new terminology of economic and social importance was added to the development of the Canudos literature. Edmundo Moniz follows in Facó's wake with a more dramatic approach, as will be illustrated. Today the idea of class conflict has infiltrated the most cursory explanation of Canudos history.

As we have already seen, the Canudos movement was originally seen as a political conspiracy against the new Republican regime, but this idea was discarded almost immediately after the destruction of Canudos. By the time Canudos could no longer pose a threat to national consolidation, Brazilian intellectuals challenged the military histories by calling the war a fratricide. Others have considered the movement a fanatical religious sect and have studied Canudos within a socio-anthropological context. According to Facó and Moniz, the Canudos movement is instead a manifestation of social protest against a semi-feudal society where the wealthy property owners ruled, where their control was maintained by the local and police authorities, and where injustice, ignorance and poverty victimized a semi-servile population. In the new terminology the latifundists are the real cause of the war, for they reacted

against a community of people who had discovered a socio-economic system that allowed them autonomy from the oppression of latifundist domination. Once termed "jagunços," "bandits" and "religious fanatics," the Marxists redefined the canudenses according to their economic activity: artisans, small farmers dispossessed of their land, cow hands, migrant workers and ex-slaves.

The materialists view the Canudos settlement as an experiment in land reform. Facó explains that the issue was not over the land itself but over the "function" of the land, that is, against the latifundist system. Both Facó and Moniz maintain that the Canudos peasants realized their social protest through the construction of an egalitarian community when Antônio Conselheiro redistributed unoccupied land to his followers. These writers suggest that in this way, the Canudos community remained outside the control of the latifundia. When persecuted, the canudenses reacted defensively to protect their newly gained rights. The materialists' theory revolves around the idea that political evolution in Brazil called for land reform. In fact, Moniz assumes that the Republican ideal was to institute land reform, extend its progressive platform to the social problems in the interior and establish a socialist program.⁴ However, the bourgeoisie lacked the strength to oppose the latifundia at the beginning of the Republican period to effect such reforms. Since the historical circumstances

were not appropriate for this step, Canudos was an anachronistic development in the direction of land reform and so was eliminated by the power base.

In both his book Cangaceiros e Fanáticos and his article "A Guerra Camponesa de Canudos," Facó explains the impetus behind the Canudos conflict as an illustration of hegemonic solidarity: the dominant classes considered the monopoly of land as sacred and in the case of popular unrest culminating in an armed fight--the "highest form" of class struggle--support was consolidated behind the latifundists. To admit that the masses were in actuality combatting feudal oppression would be to admit that they had the right to revolt. The dominant classes effaced the real causes and objectives of the conflict and thus blamed the canudenses for acts of banditry and labelled them religious fanatics. When this did not suffice, they fabricated the belief that it was also an anti-Republican Restoration movement.

According to the materialists, the canudenses reorganized labor relations and property ownership within their settlement to a more communistic scheme and so were perceived as a threat to the latifundist system. Without successfully achieving synthesis, their interpretation is based on the premise that each of the dominant sectors--the Church, property owners and the military--worked in unison in a sort of class conspiracy. Both writers simplify any complications of the historical circumstances to reduce the

situation to a single class conspiracy yet fail to illustrate exactly how each sector may have complemented and supported each other against the Canudos movement.

José Bastos has written perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of the political background and ideologies of Canudos writers. He is eclectic in his outlook, borrowing from different Marxist, political and anthropological theories. In his "A Ideologia dos Discursos sobre Canudos," he explains that the dominant sectors viewed Canudos as a common enemy and, even if unconsciously (for ideology is inseparable from human praxis), they faced the problem with a united front. In A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República, Bastos describes the Canudos situation as one episode in a power struggle between oligarchies. That is, Florianism pretended to represent the middle class but its elite members extended to Florianism the oligarchical character of the Monarchist regime. These oligarchs struggled to maintain power in their home states under the Republican government. Jacobins wanted a dictatorship guided by positivist ideas--there was a temporary united front of the different sectors against the threat of Canudos but the oligarchy was the real pulse behind the attack.⁵

The Church formed part of the conspiracy which determined to eradicate the Canudos movement. Official religion conforms to the existing social order and thus does not "cure the ills" of that order. Canudos is an example of

tensions and the resulting break between the Church and its lay masses whose religious needs were unfulfilled. According to Bastos, the mechanisms of the Church failed because Church functionaries were integrated under the bureaucratic hierarchical authority--official religion contributes, even deceptively, to the status quo. So the Church attacked Conselheiro as a leader of a "rival sect," a charlatan to be discredited and whose followers needed to be disbanded.

Other intellectuals shared with the oligarchy, continues Bastos in "A Ideologia dos Discursos sobre Canudos," the same values and categories constituting a homogeneous ideology. This, rationalized through scientific principles, affirmed the innate inequality among humans. Euclides' analysis confirms the racial inferiority of the lower classes as many contemporary writers propounded Nina Rodrigues' collective insanity theory. The dominant class's conservative archetype of normality became the standard of measurement: civilization must overcome barbarity, so the more expedient use of force against Canudos was approved. The Canudos revolt challenged "natural" law, so violence was legitimized.

Land of Plenty

Ataliba Nogueira documents the cultivation of crops in Canudos for the subsistence of the community in the middle

of a drought-stricken area, the development of a goat leather export industry, and the composition of orderly and hard-working inhabitants.⁶ Facó and Moniz carry this image of plenty further to describe a community working in solidarity to share equally in the benefits of their labor. In Moniz's Canudos (1978), order and the work ethic reigned. There were no police or tax collectors, no prostitutes, and all the women were good wives and mothers working in agriculture and sharing a 'solidarity.' There was no violence. The town was self-sufficient and even sold its extra produce to neighboring towns. The inhabitants exported leather and all shared the profits of this trade. Everyone entering the settlement donated half of their possessions to the common 'pot.'

Such prosperity in the middle of the sertão, though considered inexplicable by some Canudos scholars, seems natural to Moniz: Conselheiro was the exclusive authority over the canudenses and he exercised great powers of persuasion to both maintain organization, work and discipline in his camp, and to establish good relations with their neighbors to buy needed supplies cheaply. Collective ownership of the land and its products allowed a peaceful existence as well as autonomy from the semi-feudal structure of the dominant latifundist system. The modifications in production that were supposedly effected in Canudos under Conselheiro's management would have functioned independently

of the Brazilian mode of production under the latifundia. These changes in the base would have resulted in (positive) changes in the superstructure. Therefore, radical modifications in the system of production in Canudos extended to the social relationships among the inhabitants, effecting a socialist type of utopia.

Religion as Pretext

Religion plays a role in Facó's interpretation (1983), but as an "appropriate ideology" for the sertanejo which fit his material needs. Conselheiro was a religious leader, for the religion of the canudenses became the ideology of their social struggle. Mysticism was an expression of the schism between the classes. Facó explains that during this period of decadence for the official Church in Brazil, popular sects sprang up outside of the Church. The "primitive" religion of these followers, with its self-imposed rites of sacrifice, corresponded to their lives of suffering. The sects became an instrument in the social struggle for liberation.

In A Guerra Social de Canudos, Moniz agrees that the Canudos movement was seductive to the populace not for its celestial promises but for its social nature. Religion was a pretext to attract a following, and later it became a vehicle toward economic and social emancipation. Conselheiro preached not the salvation of souls but the

salvation of material rights. Moniz assumes that Conselheiro openly protested against such things as low wages, abuses of the authorities, usurped land and slavery, as he disclaims the religious aspect of the movement. He argues that though not condoned, Conselheiro did not condemn "free love." In such a manner, the canudenses then enjoyed freedom from the old values and traditions because Conselheiro recognized the "falsity" of the common moral standards, and so "the inhabitants felt free of the coercive weight of Puritan hypocrisy."⁷ These social changes were steps toward the realization of Conselheiro's utopian ideal.

Although manifested within the realm of religious belief, the peasant actors were "unconscious" of the true motivation of their actions. The role of religion, whether it served as "pretext" for Moniz or an "appropriate ideology" for Facó, is thus minimalized in the Marxist model.

Evolution/Revolution

There can be two different visions in Marxist interpretation: the evolution of society toward a utopian goal, or revolution to effect social change in the present. In Cangaceiros e Fanáticos, Facó traces the evolution of social protest in 19th century Brazil. He leans toward the belief in evolutionary development toward an ideal future, which theoretically involves a transition into socialist

society after a capitalist phase developed out of feudalism. There is a contradiction between this belief and the portrayal of Canudos as revolutionary in nature. Facó resolves this contradiction by describing Canudos as the 'eruption' of an enlightened society before its appropriate time--which consequently explains its destruction.⁸

Bastos agrees that tensions were particularly high during the early Republican period, and that anarchy and discontent extended to the northeastern backlands where the land owners started to arm themselves and hired jagunços for their defense.⁹ Droughts caused a permanent state of nomadism among the population, which could no longer be absorbed elsewhere in the country after European immigration; the stock market crash and the coffee crisis cut off economic possibilities in areas outside the sertão. Facó sees the increase of beatos (like Conselheiro) and cangaceiros as spontaneous manifestations of revolt stemming from social consciousness. From a deformed economy sprouted the phenomena of messianism and social banditry. It was not until the first half of the following century that the followers of the Contestado messianic movement (1912-1916) finally realized that the true motive of peasant rebellion in Brazil was land ownership.¹⁰

Moniz saw revolution in the radical protest of the Canudos movement. Facó cites more evolutionary change and focuses on surrounding conditions and historical

circumstance. Although the central character in Facó's work is the environment, Moniz's writings concentrate more on the characterization of the major human participants in the Canudos "peasant insurrection."

Peasant Actors

"History," Moniz insists, has hidden the true qualities of its peasant actors. His brand of Marxist ideology consciously identifies itself with the ideology of the proletariat, which is in constant struggle with the bourgeois ideology. Moniz has offered a heroic depiction of his Canudos peasant actors.

Characterization of the peasant actors is key to Moniz's interpretation. He traces a metonymical relationship between the Canudos movement and its leader. Conselheiro is not only Moniz's main character but a very deliberate one, conscious of his own actions and their historic implications. Conselheiro had wandered through the sertão for years witnessing first-hand the miserable state of the oppressed peasant. He adopted a social cause in the guise of an apostolic mission. Religion for both Facó and Moniz assumes a strictly utilitarian role. Antônio Conselheiro used religion as a means to reach his people but what he promised them, according to Moniz's interpretation, was not the salvation of their souls but an egalitarian society based on the principles of Thomas More's Utopia.

Moniz makes the assumption that Conselheiro was familiar with the Utopia and tried to emulate its ideas with his followers.¹² Moniz writes that More's Utopia was the product of a humanistic ideology during a period of transition from a feudal to a bourgeois regime. These ideas were then communicated to Antônio Conselheiro who planted the seed among his followers. These followers were already carrying the idea subconsciously, at a time when they were also experiencing a change from a type of feudalism to a bourgeois system. Moniz never satisfactorily illustrates the Canudos episode as historically determined--he assumes a leap from the communist utopian ideal to Conselheiro's plans for his community of followers.

Moniz's Conselheiro deliberately chose the remote and abandoned Canudos for the realization of his socialist settlement for strategic reasons, for he anticipated persecution. Facó sees the settlement and the occurrences which led to its foundation as a more spontaneous development, starting from the peasants' first outburst against overburdening taxes. Moniz writes in A Guerra Social de Canudos that the Conselheiro did not plan any insubordination to the Republic, for he was not political. Conselheiro's only real enemy was the latifundia. Conselheiro believed in peaceful means to establish equality by abolishing social classes. His first act of protest occurred when he "ordered" the burning of the newly posted

tax edicts, an episode precedent to the Canudos war that in other literature has been described as a "spontaneous" reaction of the crowd at market. Moniz interprets this as a non-violent act. The police at Masseté were sent against them, for this act of rebellion was considered unacceptable and the refusal to pay taxes to the Republic later served as a pretext--not a motive--of military aggression. But Moniz's Conselheiro led an intentional revolt against the system of the dominant classes and later even became a military leader personally supervising the battle strategies. Moniz never resolves his antithetical characterization of the Conselheiro as a peace-loving representative of a social cause as well as a military leader. Moniz describes instead a Conselheiro conscious of his own actions and their historic implications--who actively and deliberately attracted a populace through their cohesion to religion and led a movement toward his pre-conceived social utopia, at the same time insisting that the discontented sertanejos would have mounted a rebellion even without the leadership of Conselheiro.

Rhetorical Techniques

Hayden White, who examines historical discourse as literature in his Tropics of Discourse, addresses the techniques characteristic of Marxist historical discourse. He describes the writing of materialists as "distortionist,"

under the following categories: 1) certain representability of their Marxist version as the true as well as plausible one; 2) the condensation of material by overdetermining certain elements and not mentioning others; and 3) the displacement by juxtaposing the so-called "real story," that is, events which imply social significance according to the materialists, with the "apparent" events. The interpretations of Facó and especially Moniz neatly correspond to these categories. First, they portend to enlighten the reader with their 'definitive' version of the history of Canudos. Second, after a consideration of the historical writings on Canudos it is obvious that they have carefully chosen which details to romanticize and which to obscure. Much evidence from other discourses on Canudos contradicts or questions many of the assumptions made in the Marxist interpretation. Third, Facó and especially Moniz enlist certain rhetorical devices including juxtaposition to gain the reader's sympathy for whomever they interpret to be the protagonists of the history.

The contemporary histories on the Canudos war were directed toward the military; the intellectuals wrote for other intellectuals; the anthropologists have written for a readership of students of the social sciences--but Facó and especially Moniz write, and purposely, for an audience that falls into a much wider range than their own specialized category. Elements of style and rhetoric also reveal the

ideological underpinning of the literature of these two writers. The authors' style reflects their intention. Facó's Cangaceiros e Fanáticos is obviously intended for the intellectual. He carefully develops what seems to be a sound sociological picture of the Brazilian sertão and the influences of the environment on the Canudos event, until it later becomes dogmatic, with Marxist jargon. Moniz, however, writes for a broader readership, especially in the reduced version of his topic that is published with the title Canudos. A Luta pela Terra.

Except for its very didactic tone, A Guerra Social de Canudos reads more like a novel than a history text as Moniz is conscious of his intention to portray the history of Canudos as a story--for him, not a fictitious one but a credible (if not historically documented) one. Moniz narrates his version of the history by filling in small details without citing any sources. He also presumes the opinions, intentions, emotions, ulterior motives, and reactions of his actors. He employs the rhetorical technique of inference, that is, his explanations are prefaced with statements like "probably . . .", "logic dictates . . .", and ". . . must have been . . .". His text is constructed to read as a coherent narration. For the narration to hold the (non-intellectual) reader's interest, certain moments are over-dramatized, such as Antônio Maciel's biography, and Moniz relies occasionally on

dramatic images: Conselheiro is likened to Zapata in the Mexican revolution and the tragedy of Canudos is another Troy. To aid his particular perspective on the events, he also uses selective memory: he chooses to use certain information which supports his thesis while other data which exists in the literature he neither disputes nor mentions.¹³ Repetition is another persuasive technique for the Marxist discourse and Moniz, like Facó, repeats the same message throughout the texts: the sertanejo was victim to misery and oppression; Canudos was the refuge of the oppressed; and the Canudos war was a manifestation of class struggle.

Moniz's A Luta pela Terra is even more didactic--it is a short, illustrated handbook in large print and written in a more direct and dramatic language. It follows a natural succession of events from Conselheiro's formation to the destruction of Canudos. It also contains a chronology of events deemed to be of importance, a selected bibliography, an interview with the author and a question section for comprehension titled "Did You Understand the Text?"--the questions posed in this section lead to the same issue: the fight over land. Its purpose is clearly one of indoctrination.

Class Conflict

Facó assumes that his intended reader is well enough indoctrinated in classical Marxist jargon to understand the

terminology used. His message at first seems subtle but becomes redundant over the expanse of his argument--all of his explanations lead to the one conclusion that conforms with his Marxist ideology: the class struggle theory. Repetition of the key concepts reiterate the message. His rhetorical tone detracts from the appearance of objectivity--he resorts to the use of phrases such as "It should not be surprising that . . .;"¹⁴ he gains sympathy for his victims of oppression with the comment: "Are they simple criminals, these tens of thousands of poor in the sertão that rebelled for such a long period of our history?;"¹⁵ and he questions the mysticism of the religious movements with: "It must have been a strange mysticism that only effected the poor!"¹⁶ He drifts occasionally from an explanatory tone to an oratory style to elicit sympathy or outrage on the part of the reader, for example, when he describes "reality" for the canudense: ". . . thousands of outcasts from the countryside armed in defense of their own survival, fighting, even though spontaneously and not consciously, against a monstrous and secular latifundist and semi-feudal oppression, openly violating the most sacred of all the privileges secularly established since the beginning of European colonization in Brazil--the monopoly of land in the hands of a minority exploiting the immense majority. This was the most hideous of crimes against the dominant order."¹⁷

Facó's argument is rendered indisputable simply due to its hermenetic nature since he insists that the social protest belying the Canudos case was not only a start in the direction of class revolution but it was done without any real consciousness of the popular cause.¹⁸ In other words, he presents as appropriate the application of a 20th century perception, that of class conflict, to a world without knowledge of class theory and its implications, because one can be made responsible for an action without realizing it or describing it in the same language as another.

Many explanations in the materialists' texts are reduced in various ways to class conflict. Their manipulation of the literature to persuade the reader to see a social phenomenon in a certain way, and the techniques they use to that end, are intentional. Moniz admits that his re-creation of the Canudos episode was deliberate and 'original.' He writes in A Guerra Social de Canudos: "My work is not based only on the written documentation. It is also based on what I saved from oral tradition. It is not a repetition of what the others wrote about Canudos. It contains something new not only in relation to the facts but also in relation to historical interpretation."¹⁹ Moniz, contrary to the role of a historian, begins with the conclusions and chooses the evidence that fits into his theory. Facó is guilty of this to a much lesser degree.²⁰ Moniz views the result and concludes, not speculates, as to

what the cause must have been: the latifundists were the only ones to gain from a war on Canudos (since the bourgeois revolution hypothetically supported land reform, the military spilled its own blood and the clergy lost prestige due to their part in the conflict) when they successfully prevented land reform, so one must examine the agrarian reform issue and its repression as the pivotal determinant of the conflict.

Juxtaposing

Moniz's language is consistently dramatic. He compares the Canudos tragedy to Troy--a metaphor connoting heroism and the shameful destruction of a people. Juxtapositioning makes Moniz's images more dramatic. In A Luta pela Terra he juxtaposes Conselheiro's material promises of land and equal rights to the Catholic priests' promises of paradise after death, as Conselheiro aligned with the poor and the priests shared the privileges of the powerful. Using placement and description he also contrasts the Republican soldiers, depicted as panicked, disorderly, looters and aggressors, with the peaceful yet confident canudenses during the first expedition. Throughout the campaign the only indiscretions of honor were committed by the soldiers, who sacked and burned the properties they passed through. Many deserted--for some apparently came to identify with the victims of oppression. Moniz's texts are replete with

examples of such adjectivization. The soldiers are associated with hate, fury, cowardice, anger and fear. Their military prowess is defamed by scandal, logistic problems and mismanagement--the Republican victory is attributable only to their superiority of numbers.

On the other side the Canudos characters and their actions in battle are eulogized. The capable efficiency of the community's administration is carried over to its military organization and the prosperity of the settlement during peacetime grants them an advantage in supplies. The sertanejos are "primitive heroes" and their leader is intellectually superior. In A Luta pela Terra, the actions of Canudos heroes mayor João Abade and ex-soldier Pajeu are juxtaposed to the bloody and ambitious career of coronel Moreira César. Repetition, reduction and the juxtapositioning of the opposing sides--Republican army and Canudos residents in their Manichaeian dichotomy--are all rhetorical tools to drive home the materialist thesis.

Facó's dichotomy is less blatantly 'black and white' but it is obviously sympathetic to the canudenses. He defends the atrocities of the conselheiristas, explaining that their behavior was a direct response to the atrocities previously committed against them, because they had the conviction to protect what was theirs. Their "collective heroism" described a resistance attributable to a cause.

Antonio Gramsci prescribed such literary devices to raise popular conceptions so to incorporate the populace to the level of the intellectual elite, and to effect change in history, through a cultural movement. In Concepção Dialética da História Gramsci writes that there are "certain necessities for all cultural movements that aim at substituting common sense and the old conceptions of the world in general" and these are "1) not to tire of repeating the same arguments (varying the literary form): repetition is the most effective didactic means to act on the popular mentality; 2) to work incessantly so to intellectually elevate more and more numbers of the lower classes . . . to work on the creation of intellectual elites of a different type, that spring directly from the masses and that stay in contact with the masses to turn them into their supporters."²¹ Facó takes inspiration from the first suggestion but Moniz's work is more clearly illustrative of the second part of the program, for his is intended more for the non-intellectual, one who could perhaps better influence the illiterate.

Role Reversal

The materialist writers manipulate the sympathies of the reader in their portrayal of the peasant actors. The official history, full of patriotic rhetoric, until now has not been contradicted since the enemy had literally been

silenced, but now both Facó and Moniz reverse the dichotomy of the official history--during the Canudos war the soldiers are now negatively described as cowardly, brutal, incompetent, and desertors. The canudenses are admirable, heroic, superior in tactics and loyal to their cause. Any barbarity on the part of the Republican soldiers is chastised and similar behavior on the conselheirista side is rationalized and excused.

Bastos also reverses the military paradigm as he perceives the military to be the attackers and the canudenses to be the defenders. In his A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República the Uauá incident is described not as a deliberate aggression on the part of the conselheiristas because if it had happened that way, they would have been better prepared to attack and to defend themselves. Instead Bastos' group of Canudos pilgrims approached the soldiers' encampment praying aloud and the Republican advance sentinels fired on them and precipitated combat.²² Here the military are the "bad guys" shooting down the conselheiristas en masse from the protection of houses. The Canudos insurrection was actually a "counter-violence"²³ of a people who lived peacefully and laboriously. Though the Conselheiro preached a Monarchist "faith" there was never any intent of aggression--for the canudenses, their fight was a legitimate defense and a struggle for survival.

Addendum

Ironically, the Marxist purpose in studying history is not simply to re-interpret the world, contrary to the stated pretense of these writers to "rewrite history," but to effect social change. According to the theory, with improved comprehension of the true nature of the world and the function of social praxis may come an improved capacity to transform it. Curiously, a popular movement for social, political and economic reform in the sertão, championed by Brazilian Catholic priest Padre Enoque, has taken shape in the 1980's, after the publication of Moniz's reader. The movement has adopted the Marxist interpretation of the Canudos event as a successful experiment in agrarian reform and communal labor and has named itself the New Historical Canudos Movement. The handbook Noventa Anos Depois . . . Canudos de Novo describes in illustrated fashion Conselheiro's project as a labor movement struggling against the political and economic oppression of the latifundists, and it calls the people to action. This movement was coincidental to an ecological project headed by the National University of the State of Bahia (UNEB) to establish a commemorative park in the area of Canudos, alongside a concerted push to alleviate sertanejos' distrust of police with the latters' volunteer efforts toward sanitary and health improvements to the town. This action has been

interpreted by the natives, however, as a second attempt after the 1950's dam project immersed a major portion of Canudos under water, to dislocate the inhabitants and subvert the new Canudos movement. So it seems the historical Canudos event is not currently just a literary polemic but has become emblematic of a modern concern, for the living memory of the Conselheiro among the sertanejos and their tradition of religiosity has been tapped into so to more easily indoctrinate them under the aegis of the Catholic Church (if not officially) to a program of protest and reform.²⁴

Notes

¹ Euclides da Cunha refers to Canudos as having operated under the principles of a primitive communism: "coletivismo tribal," Os Sertões (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1985) 237.

² José Augusto Cabral Barreto Bastos, "A Ideologia dos Discursos sobre Canudos" (Masters' Thesis Salvador da Bahia, 1979) 9.

³ Bastos, 10.

⁴ Edmundo Moniz, A Guerra Social de Canudos (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1978) 11.

⁵ "On the occasion of the Canudos war, despite their differences, the oligarchies united, but that alliance was provisional and circumstantial: it was a matter of defending the system and class privileges that they sensed was threatened." José Augusto Cabral Barreto Bastos, A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República (Salvador: n.p., 1975) 42, my translation.

⁶ Ataliba Nogueira wrote his own revision in light of the discovery of one of Conselheiro's manuscripts. His depiction of Canudos is based on evidence from Conselheiro's writings and a variety of historical sources. Antônio

Conselheiro e Canudos (São Paulo: Cia. Editora Nacional, 1974).

⁷ Moniz, 47, my translation.

⁸ One very convincing critic of the materialist interpretation is sociologist Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz who posits the primitive or religious "communism" of Canudos as very different from the modern communism formed in lay rather than religious terms. The Marxist model describes a particular economic evolution to a certain stage where communism is possible, therefore, any such parallels drawn with systems prior to that evolutionary period in history cannot be considered the same type of phenomenon. Canudos more closely parallels the religious communism of the Middle Ages when, according to her theory of kinship already mentioned, the economic structure was still grounded on familial and paternalistic structures. She contends that it is not legitimate to attribute to this type of society which allows the development of the messianic phenomenon a definable lower class with uniformity of social position and without strict ties to other classes. In the anthropological interpretation, the rise of religious cults is not the same phenomenon as modern mass movements structurally or ideologically. See O Messianismo no Brasil e no Mundo (São Paulo: Dominus Editora, 1965).

⁹ Bastos, A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República, 1.

¹⁰ Maurício Vinhas de Queiroz's Messianismo e Conflito Social (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1966) examines the Contestado movement and the role that land ownership played.

¹¹ Neo-Marxist Frederic Jameson addresses the issue of the reconstruction of history to give voice to the non-hegemonic classes, because the popular or subversive discourse is missing from official history. But the Marxists examined here do not fill this gap, for their voice is not that of the people. In The Political Unconscious (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), Jameson describes the necessity for a dialogical system between the hegemony and the silent plebe. So to genuinely approximate the reconstruction of the marginalized voice, that is, to really investigate the history of the canudenses from their perspective, it must be by constructing a discourse from the remnants of the peasant culture. Materialists like Facó and Moniz neither delve into the folk literature that exists surrounding the Canudos war--verses, songs, miracles, legends--nor do they deal with the belief system of these people. Instead they minimize the significance of the religious aspect of the Canudos movement by referring to religion as a pretext to congregate the masses or as a vehicle toward economic and social

emancipation. The popular discourse, in order to be given equal status in the class dialogue, would necessarily be centered on the religious discourse.

¹² Moniz's argument is weak. The link between More's philosophy and the Conselheiro's is drawn from the evidence of one moment when Conselheiro cites the refusal of More to submit to King Henry VIII in one of his sermons. Actually, Conselheiro had preached against the evils of Protestantism and this is the most likely context for the reference to More.

¹³ Some of Moniz's statements openly contradict other existing literature and they serve no function except to manipulate details to fit under his own thesis. For example, he writes in A Guerra Social de Canudos that the conselheiristas preferred to aim at the officers over the soldiers not for strategic reasons as the military histories explain, but because it served as a cathartic act--in this motion they released their hatred for all officiality, all authority, since the conflict was over a question of classes.

¹⁴ Rui Facó, Cangaceiros e Fanáticos, (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1983) 112.

¹⁵ Facó, 16, my translation.

¹⁶ Facó, 124.

¹⁷ Facó, 85, my translation.

¹⁸ Facó writes, "the class enemy is not clearly perceived, . . . misfortune appears to fall from the sky, like punishments, and it is necessary to implore the blessing of the heavens, in which peasant individualism prevails and group solidarity is well limited.", 46, my translation.

¹⁹ Moniz, 268, my translation.

²⁰ E.g., Facó writes in Cangaceiros e Fanáticos that robbery was prohibited to the conselheiristas because the support of their neighbors was to be vital during battle.

²¹ Antonio Gramsci, Os Intelectuais e a Organização da Cultura (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1968) 27.

²² Bastos, A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República 26.

²³ Bastos, A Guerra de Canudos e a Política da República 46.

²⁴ Also see Renato Almeida, "Ação do Exército Leva Assistência a Canudos", A Tarde, (Salvador, Bahia) 23 Sept. 1986: 4; Edivaldo M. Boaventura, "Educação em Canudos", A Tarde, (Salvador, Bahia) 25 Sept. 1986, Caderno 2: 2; Cíntia Campos, "Padre Enoque, o Novo Conselheiro?", Tribuna da Bahia, (Salvador) 13 Oct. 1986: 23.

VARGAS LLOSA'S "LA GUERRA DEL FIN DEL MUNDO:"
HISTORICAL NOVEL AS LATIN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

This section is devoted to the discourse of fiction: the historical novel. The focus is exclusively on the novel La guerra del fin del mundo (The War of the End of the World) published in 1981 by Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. There were other novels prior to Vargas Llosa's published on the theme of the Canudos war and Conselheiro's religious campaign. A few, like Os Jagunços (1898) and Guerra de Canudos (1898), written by war correspondents Afonso Arinos (pseud. Olívio de Barros) and Favila Nunes respectively, and Paulo Dantas' Capitão Jagunço (orig. c. 1952), are interesting testimonials to the ideology of the time. An English version titled A Brazilian Mystic by Robert Cunninghame Graham was published in 1920. Canudos sympathizer Manuel Benício wrote his O Rei dos Jagunços three years prior to Euclides' Os Sertões. But although Benício's work would be of special interest to the Canudos scholar, it fails as a novel--it is neither good history nor good fiction.¹ Vargas Llosa is the first since Euclides to bring the Canudos event to the attention of an international audience. His novel is of special interest to us, despite Vargas Llosa's Peruvian origin (or perhaps because of it),

for his work reflects a penetrating investigation into the Canudos phenomenon through research in various fields, and through the clarification of issues that are most relevant to the wider Latin American experience.

As Brazilian intellectuals have sought to structure an image of national identity by evaluating their past history, Vargas Llosa goes beyond the boundaries of nationality. Vargas Llosa's intent is to novelize the Canudos event as a Latin American phenomenon, to explore the ideologies of its participants and to examine the dichotomies characteristic of Latin American social reality. Although the appeal is to the past, Vargas Llosa intends to elucidate the present Latin American situation by exposing the root of its problems.² For Brazil, the early Republican period marked the beginning of an epoch of transition, but Vargas Llosa would assert that the same issues and concerns stemming from this critical time persist unresolved in modern day Latin America. Vargas Llosa's historical novel is contemporary in its significance.

The Historical Novel

Debate continues in criticism over the dual nature of Vargas Llosa's chosen genre. Certain elements are coincidental to both historical and literary discourse, and other elements are exclusive to one and not the other. The debate centers on the permissible amount of play between

these elements in the historical novel, that is, the placement of the boundaries between documented historical veracity and the poetic, creative or literary aspect. Amado Alonso insists that a critical attitude is required to reconstruct a past event with an authentic "arqueological" background: one must find a complementary balance between grandiose actions and quotidian cultural circumstance.³ Generally, the balance between history and art is decided through content and form: the content of the historical novel originates from historical material while the novel's form pertains to art.

Aristotle described history as a study of the particular: relating what happened. Poetry concerns the universal: narrating what may have happened within the laws of probability and necessity.⁴ Lukacs interprets these laws as historical necessity, or the concrete historical circumstance which forces the novel's characters to act and react: in La guerra, it is the Canudos war. Historical necessity parallels the literary concept of verisimilitude to resolve the dualism between history and poetry. With the "solution" of verisimilitude literary critics privilege the creative element, as the historical novelist is allowed to go beyond the limits of history to penetrate characters and the motives behind their actions.

History and Fiction

The fictive element in La guerra is most important to our study of narrative interpretation. The imagined characters and their actions contribute the most to the text's ideological signification.⁵ Vargas Llosa's novel suggests the impossibility of reconstructing what happened at Canudos except through fiction. It is through his fictional characters, their conversations and interactions, that we get the most complete and comprehensive view of reality as portrayed in the novel. The other genres represented in Vargas Llosa's narrative such as friar Marciano's report on the canudenses, Galileo Gall's letters to his underground newspaper and the "yellow" journalistic reports concerning Monarchist intrigue, in content prove to be incompatible with the novel's reality.

Narrative history shares some of the same elements of the novel but a basic element which distinguishes history proper from the historical novel is the free play of the role of fate or chance.⁶ In La guerra, chance contributes to the theme of misunderstanding. The chance meetings and interrelations between main characters in twists of fate serve a technical function to enable the development of the plot. Vargas Llosa's plot acts from the interplay between intention,⁷ and happenstance.⁸ The more capricious element of happenstance is significant to Vargas Llosa's own theory of history which the novel echoes. The omniscient narrator

defines history as the combination of the cause/effect relationship and accidents: "What they shared for months had created between them [Jurema, the near-sighted journalist and the dwarf] that bond, the finding themselves, without dreaming it, without wanting it, without knowing how, through those strange, fantastic chains of causes and effects, of fate, accidents and of coincidences which are history, catapulted together in these extraordinary events, in this life at the edge of death. That is what had united them in this way."⁹

La guerra del fin del mundo portrays an autonomous narrative world resulting from the creative combination of historical anecdote, an understanding of the social sciences (Vargas Llosa seems to favor the anthropological interpretation in his description of the organization of Canudos and the millenarian ideology of his sertanejo characters) with narrative style and technique. Vargas Llosa takes great artistic license in his interpretation of history but here the panacea-like notion of verisimilitude sanctifies the sacrifice of historical veracity for narrative autonomy. That is, the characters act believably within a narrative world that maintains logical relations between its elements. But through history a mimetic link is maintained with the real world as La guerra represents a microcosm of the macrocosm which is Latin American reality.

The relation Vargas Llosa's novel maintains with its historical "metatext"¹⁰ is evident not only in the circumstances of the war but also in his depiction of the Canudos settlement. Vargas Llosa's Canudos resembles the anthropological interpretation of sertanejo society, portrayed in its fatalism, deep faith, practicality and simple wisdom. Vargas Llosa has an advantage over earlier historians as his novel is written in the light of Ataliba Nogueira's revision. Vargas Llosa attributes to his character Conselheiro the doctrines elicited from the sermons of the historical figure: Conselheiro's struggle against the Republican "antiChrist" stems from a misinterpretation of the Republic's intentions as anti-Church and anti-Abolitionist. And of course, Euclides' Os Sertões is very much present in La guerra, for example, in the characterization of historical figures and Conselheiro's prophecies of the apocalypse.

Historical Anecdote

History enters Vargas Llosa's novel in the form of historical anecdote. Reality sparks the creative imagination. Stories encountered in the historical literature and newspaper reports on Canudos inspired plot lines in La guerra. Vargas Llosa describes the murder of one Republican soldier by another to avenge the former's abuse of the latter's wife. By this we are reminded of

rumors that Moreira César was actually shot by one of his soldiers for a similar reason. The medical student of the Republican forces who documents the human destruction during the campaign is reminiscent of real medical student Horcades' diary. Pajeu's scornful attitude toward death in confronting the enemy is inspired by Euclides' description of the black jagunço prisoner who defied death at the hands of his captors. The libelous and inflammatory reporting of the highly politicized periodicals of the period offered the most potential for drama.

The most dramatic moments of the novel revolve around the idea of conspiracy--Vargas Llosa fills a void in "official" history by fictionalizing and dramatizing the historically documented confabulation between the Gonçalves/Geremoabo camp and governor Viana's allies. Vargas Llosa concretizes the Republicans' paranoic suspicion in the false (the arms sent through Gall were never really destined to aid the jagunços) and fictionalized (this twist is completely Vargas Llosa's invention) conspiracy involving character Epaminondas Gonçalves. Vargas Llosa's Gonçalves manipulates Galileo Gall into implicating the baron and the Monarchists in aiding the jagunço movement. The seed for this particular plot line was obviously inspired by historical anecdote--the supposed "discovery" of gun runners with supplies for the insurrectionists in a wagon train heading from Minas Gerais. According to the story, police

guards pursued the gun runners who finally managed to escape capture.

Style and Technique

La guerra is atypical for Vargas Llosa, not only because it is his first attempt at the historical novel, but also because it is more conventional in style and technique than his previous works, though this choice seems intentional. Vargas Llosa communicates the idea that history is to be constructed, and all that this implies, through the technique of fragmentation of narrative time and space. His style is comparable to the historian's task of reconstruction: the reader must impose his or her own order on the fictional world of La guerra in the process of reading the fragments, just as the historian imposes an intelligible order from the literature and documentation to (re-)construct a story.

Omniscient narration allows for a panorama of space (the sertão and Salvador) and of action (the Canudos campaign, the political machinations of enemy camps, and the affective episodes of individual characters). The rupture of chronology (and therefore, rupture of cause/effect logic in the narration) gives the reader a sense of simultaneity. To reinforce the conflict between polarized dichotomies Vargas Llosa uses a series of dialogues or dogmatic glosses spouted from ideological characters in opposition. His

structure of alternating episodes highlights the poles of autonomous narrative space conferred to the primitive world of the sertão and the modern world of the Republicans. Due to the inconsistent presence of the omniscient narrator and the absence of a central point of view, no synthesis of ideas is ever reached. Readers are forced to construct their own conclusions from the totality of points of view through Vargas Llosa's technique of perspectivism.

A Story of Misunderstandings

Vargas Llosa achieves multiple perspectivism through a combination of dialogues, interior monologues, omniscient narration and literary subtexts--letters, articles and prophecies. Ariel Dorfman sees in Vargas Llosa the fundamental law of relativization where there is no one truth but only changing perspectives: "Man never comes to understand the totality in which he finds himself submerged. The present, fleeting, is the product of innumerable past, parallel and future accidents."¹¹ Conflict in the novel arises in the absence of communication and comprehension, for the narrative characters are not privy to, or are unheeding of, the information and interiorization that only the reader is in a position to understand in his or her role of story constructor or 'historian.'

In the words of Vargas Llosa's narrator, the Canudos war is a "labyrinth of misconceptions, ravings and

cruelties."¹² The plot lines of deception, conspiracy and political intrigue reinforce the theme of misunderstanding. The fictional conspiracy is a manifold one: Epimondas Gonçalves supplies Gall with arms for the jagunços while plotting Gall's death so that everyone would presume these supplies originated from the Monarchists. When the plan backfires, a stranger's corpse is planted with tufts of Gall's hair to complete the deception. In the other camp, the baron's cronies suspect the military is part of a confabulation to strip the autonomists of their power: Gumúcio believes Febrônio's defeat is deliberate to inflate the situation to the proportions of a national scandal. The intrigue reverberates in the nation's capital as the army maneuvers against president Moraes.

On the "criminal" side, the jagunços do not practice deception as the politicians do; their motives are more honorable. Canudos spokesman padre Joaquim understands that these religious fanatics act from good faith.¹³ But their faith stems from misunderstanding as they identify the Republican innovations as the onslaught of the antiChrist preceding the apocalypse. The predominance of misconception is most obvious to the baron who enjoys the privileged position of a 'semi-omniscient' character. He sees the absurdity of the war--to exterminate an ignorant yet dignified and brave people (ignorant because susceptible to the superstitions of a charlatan) under the erroneous

pretense that these are political (Monarchist Restorationists) and anglophiles (i.e. they are receiving aid from England) as they await the return of Dom Sebastião to save them.¹⁴

Misunderstanding in Vargas Llosa's narrative stems from a mutual incomprehension among individual characters and groups with their accompanying ideologies and fanaticisms. It also reflects the author's own perception of Latin American history: "What happened at Canudos," says Vargas Llosa, "is illustrative of our history. We have been killing one another for generations through blindness. In all our wars and oppressions, you find this total incapacity to understand the position of the adversary. You find this through all of our history."¹⁵ For Vargas Llosa, national division by misunderstanding as a result of ideological blindness and irreconcilable fanaticisms describes a Latin American phenomenon. This eliminates any possibility of communication or compromise.

Fanaticism

Just as conflict is represented in the Canudos literature as a series of dichotomous relationships,¹⁶ in La guerra one fanaticism opposes another. For Kaplan, Vargas Llosa's novel is exemplary of antagonistic dichotomies characteristic of the Latin American experience which leave only a false choice between revolution or militarism as a

solution.¹⁷ In La guerra each opposing party intends to realize certain transformations: the jagunços through the apocalypse, the Republicans through a utopian political ideal and certain intellectuals (represented by Gall) through a projection of European ideas,¹⁸ but all fail. No character is successful and no side in this drama is privileged over another as all are equally contaminated with ideological intolerance. Vargas Llosa achieves something that official history does not: the perspectivism in the novel emphasizes the falsity of applying dichotomies as a justification for destruction.¹⁹

Fanaticism is a common theme in Vargas Llosa's work because he believes it is the major cause for revolution in Latin America. In the wake of such "total solutions," that is, fanatical world visions, Mattos refers to the reading of Vargas Llosa's novel as the "systematic invalidation of all interpretive efforts."²⁰ But the novel offers more than just a pessimistic view if we consider the role of the reader. A reading of the novel, compounded by the technique of perspectivism, points out a void in the novel and in the history of Canudos. That lack is compromise, and it is the task of Vargas Llosa's reader to elicit his "mediocre solution" of moderation to overcome the folly of fanaticisms.²¹ For Vargas Llosa, any "total" solution such as Marxism or other dogma for the contemporary Latin American situation is ineffective against modern day

barbarisms--guerrillas, revolution, corruption, etc. The remedy lies not in radical change or romantic idealization but along the path of democracy.²²

Characterization

La guerra maintains a dialogical structure. The reader experiences the narrative world through the omniscient narrator and also through a composite of opposing views--alternating monologues directed to characters who fail to understand the other's point of view. The Canudos war is only military in appearance, the real conflict is between different ideas and interpretations of reality. Vargas Llosa evidences the theme of fanaticism through his characters and the roles they perform, which is reinforced by the technique of perspectivism.²³ In La guerra Vargas Llosa's actants fit distinct categories. Some are archetypal or historical, some are types or literary figures, others are anecdotal or political, but many fit more than a single category. The major characters represent a cause; they serve as representatives of collective actions and ideologies in conflict.²⁴

The major characters are both individuals and types symbolic of issues isolated in the Canudos discourses. The few that are founded on historical actors bear real names (or composites of real names as in the case of Epimondas Gonçalves and several canudense characters with real names

but invented biographies) like Moreira César, Pires Ferreira, Febrônio Brito, Antônio Conselheiro, Beatinho, João Abade and other conselheiristas, and they espouse their opposing faiths, Republicanism versus religion. Pivotal fictional actors are identified by epithets to isolate their most salient characteristics. For example, the pseudonym Galileo Gall identifies a phrenologist, representative of late 19th century European positivistic science. The myopic journalist, an epithet which functions as a paradoxical emblem, has no given name as his anonymity leads us to believe he is representative of all reporters. The sole title "baron" identifies a most important ideological character who represents a certain social and economic class as well as political orientation. Rufino is a "tracker," one of Euclides' sertanejo types, and the Conselheiro is referred to several times merely as a "man dressed in purple" attesting to the lack of penetration into this religious leader's psyche. Vargas Llosa's Conselheiro retains a sense of mystery, elevating him to a mythic level in the novel.

Though the novel's characters represent more than individuals, all are "rounded," i.e. shown to have human strengths and defects. All assume autonomy as they react to their circumstances according to different codes of conduct but with human emotion. The dichotomized absolutes in La Guerra are the ideologies: the characters run the gamut

from idealist to neutral. In Vargas Llosa's narrative microcosm of reality some of his characters are ridiculous, absurd or fanatical and others seem more rational or conservative, but each is, above all, human. Among the most idealistic and consequently most unidimensional characters, their tragic flaw is their blind fanaticism. Vargas Llosa invalidates the perspectives of some of his characters through caricature. He consistently "sabotages" his characters--the positive ones are given negative traits and vice-versa. For example, Moreira César's terrible reputation and capacity for committing barbarities are undermined by his charitable acts toward the poor. The most animalistic bandits become religious and repent their evil ways. The reasonable baron acts paternalistically toward his workers yet he rapes his wife's beloved maid. And Gall who is ideologically committed to the popular cause ends up only hurting those he has sworn to redeem.

Ideologies: The Sertanejos

We need to examine the main characters individually, ideologically, and in relation to the other actors, beginning with the sertanejos. Vargas Llosa's canudense characters are shrouded in mystery and legend, lending a mythic element to this narrative world. The life stories of the conselheiristas are related in the past, and read like a hagiography as they relate the conversion of sinners to

saints. The medieval romance of Roberto el Diablo is inspirational to the conversion of João Abade and also symbolic of the anachronistic culture of the sertanejos--the sertão is where feudalistic relations survive in modern times and where weekend markets and carnival performers are highlighted entertainment.

The one character at the center of the Canudos conflict is Antônio Conselheiro. Vargas Llosa's Conselheiro, however, is intentionally enigmatic. Vargas Llosa prefers third person narration over direct discourse to describe him, as well as the imperfect tense to relate his actions. In fact, Conselheiro is the only jagunço character without a personal history. The void surrounding this character is mimetic of the historical literature's lack of information about the Conselheiro during his religiously formative period. Conselheiro is both presence and absence: he acts with "accustomed indifference," glares with "cold and obsessive eyes" and speaks with a "cavernous voice."²⁵ His presence is mostly a projection from his followers, for we must interpret this charismatic figure through the actions and attitudes of the canudenses. Throughout the novel Conselheiro "acquires" divinity as he amasses more followers over the chronology of the tale until at a certain point his adepts begin to greet each other with the words "Praise be to the Good Jesus Counselor"--though he never directly works any miracles, divine powers are attributed to Conselheiro.

Vargas Llosa endows Conselheiro with the talent to convert defect into virtue. Characters do not change as much as their energy is diverted under the aegis of their leader. Bandits like Pajeu channel their strength and commitment to a holy cause; pitiful figures like the Leão de Natuba are for the first time encouraged to cultivate their special talents. This is realized through the dignity of their condition as the apocalypse promises to invert poverty to wealth for the chosen. The canudenses' actions are motivated by a belief as miraculous as the Medieval stories and Biblical revelation. Conselheiro had prophesied the end of the world in 1900: "Would the century come to an end? Would the world see the year 1900? He would answer . . . with enigmas. In 1900 the lights would go out and the stars would rain down. But before that, extraordinary events would occur . . ." ²⁶ ". . . There will be four fires," Conselheiro warns at one point. He continues, "the first three I will put out and the fourth I will leave in the hands of Good Jesus." ²⁷ These forebodings seem to prove true.

We understand Conselheiro's ideology through the dynamics of the canudenses' relations, interactions and beliefs. Their obedience to their patriarch Conselheiro and their camaraderie in action during the war mark traditional paternalistic and fraternal patterns of sertanejo behavior. Their fanaticism is their belief, a syncretistic ideology

synthesizing Christianity and sebastianism. In a conventional world view where limiting codes are followed--as illustrated in Rufino's behavior to avenge the rape of his wife by killing perpetrator and victim--anything that lies outside acceptable behavior is interpreted as strange or evil. Lay measures like civil marriage and modern modifications such as the census and taxes are interpreted as manifestations of the evil power announced by Conselheiro's prophecies--the Republic is the antiChrist. Here religion is to the jagunços as politics is to the Republicans: an obsession.²⁸

Vargas Llosa's fictional sertanejo characters represent certain codes and folk traditions to balance his "total"²⁹ narrative world with a popular element that is missing from the official history of the victors.³⁰ Traditions are archaic: Rufino must defend his honor after a foreigner rapes and absconds with his wife but dies in a seemingly senseless way, fulfilling his moral obligation by dueling in the mud with Gall. His wife Jurema incarnates the fatalism characteristic of the sertanejo culture. Throughout her circumstance she accepts what fate hands to her including the consequences of rape despite her innocence. Her options are limited to two non-choices: to allow Rufino to kill her and avenge his honor or surrender herself to destiny with her aggressor Gall. She chooses the latter because sertanejos are by nature survivors.

The Military

The staunchest champion of the Republican army is Moreira César. His blindness is also his faith, as his function as one of Vargas Llosa's characters is to represent national progress and Latin American militarism. He enters Bahia predisposed to encounter something he loathes: prehistoric conditions maintained by a system of latifundismo and European economic dependency. He expects to find at Canudos a popular rebellion orchestrated by Monarchist property owners and financed by the English.³¹ Restorationists are nothing more than impediments to progress, technology and industry following the U.S. model.³² Though he endorses the positivist spirit, César's solution is not found in the intellectuals, whom he perceives to be dangerous to his country, but in military utopianism. Dictatorship and the army are for César the only vehicles to achieve national unity, progress and equality.³³ This philosophy is significant since it marks the development of a national direction for Brazil, but in Vargas Llosa's literary work we see it not as an impulsion toward modern progress as much as an instrument of repression.

In the novel, César fulfills three different roles: he is historical figure, narrative character and myth. He is Vargas Llosa's spokesman for Republicanism. The presence of

reporters on César's campaign as well as his unforeseen visit with the baron at his estate are vehicles to elicit monologues from this character. We discover that César is so convinced of a Monarchist conspiracy that the splayed wounds of his soldiers offer him proof that the jagunços have received grenades from European supporters. He insists, "Those poor devils are an instrument of the aristocrats who will not resign themselves to the loss of their privileges, . . . Of certain fanatical priests who will not resign themselves to the separation of Church and State because they do not want to give to Caesar what is owed to Caesar. And even of England itself . . ." ³⁴ The fictional César is oxymoronic as his strong willed character contrasts his feeble physique and epilepsy. César's cruel disciplinary behavior is countered by acts of charity, consistent with Vargas Llosa's penchant for humanizing even characters of mythic proportions. Moreira César transcends human paradox not in Vargas Llosa's portrayal but in historical reputation. He was the feared "Corta-pescoço" (Beheader) whose legend sertanejos sang in verse. Vargas Llosa humanizes the myth. The death of César while defending his political ideal is the death of a legend and symbolic of the impotence of uncompromising stances.

The European Metaphor

Vargas Llosa's Galileo Gall is literally and symbolically foreign to the sertão. Gall's presence is not authentic (authenticity should not be confused with verisimilitude); he is not based on any historical character. Instead, he is an ideological figure who serves a technical narrative function. Through Gall, the reader becomes aware of certain European ideas current during the epoch. These ideas informed the contemporary Brazilian intellectuals and influenced the Republican cause. Gall's other function is as a catalyst to the political action involving the conspiratory plot of the Gonçalves camp to link the Monarchist-sympathizing autonomist party to the Canudos uprising. Because of Gall's personal interest in the developments at Canudos, he becomes easy prey to Gonçalves' machinations and is duped into running arms to the rebels. Gonçalves' attempt to assassinate Gall fails, but the deception to implicate his political enemies, the autonomist party, nevertheless succeeds in the press.

Gall's rhetoric, elicited from conversations and from letters addressed to unknown revolutionary friends in Europe, serve as a scholium of his personal political platform.³⁵ He identifies himself as a revolutionary and as a phrenologist as he prescribes atheism and science as the salvation against religion: "Revolution will liberate society from its flagellations and science will free

individuals from themselves."³⁶ Both religion and private property are the chains of exploitation to be broken through violent revolution, and Gall sees Canudos as this libertarian type of rebellion. He enters the sertão with preconceived ideas from an interview with his "enemies" the clergy, and after having read friar Marciano's report. Without ever reaching Canudos (although we have no hope that his ideas would be modified in the face of reality) Gall accepts the friar's interpretation of Canudos as an armed and mobilized camp of rebels, but through a different ideological filter. He speaks of the "instinct of freedom that classist society suffocates through those crushing machines that are the family, school, religion and the state . . ." [The jagunço₅] has learned to unite and disunite freely,"³⁷ ". . . [that] all living beings are legitimate . . . [and they hold] the conviction that man does not inherit dignity or indignity."³⁸

According to Gall, the rebels lack consciousness of the true motives of their collective action toward reorganization into communal property and toward the ultimate goal of a social utopia on earth. His dogma is a contrived, and not spontaneous one, so Gall's views are preconceived and independent of personal experience. Gall is convinced that the jagunços₅' apocalyptic vision is social in nature. He remarks that "It is as if [Conselheiro] were putting into practice our ideas, obscuring them in religious

pretext for tactical reasons, due to the cultural level of the humble that follow him. Is it not significant that in the middle of Brazil a group of insurrectionists is forming a society where marriage and money have been abolished and where collective property has replaced private property?"³⁹

Gall's significance in the novel revolves around his theory of history. According to Gall's belief in environmental determinism, society makes the criminal.⁴⁰ Although it is freak circumstance that leads Gall along his path to the sertão, chance plays no role in his concept of history. Therefore, the Canudos revolution could not be spontaneous or merely religious, but rather an attack against the base of feudalistic and bourgeois society. The jagunços do not burn neighboring properties because of its practicality in war, but instead to destroy a symbol of their oppression.⁴¹ Gall interprets all actions according to this mechanistic dogma.

Gall is out of sync with the other Bahian characters due to his eurocentricity. His doctrines are born of other historical circumstances;⁴² his behavior is unacceptable to the natives, and their motives are equally incomprehensible to him in this story of misunderstandings. Gall represents European solutions--e.g., Marxist revolution and positivism--that are heterogeneous to the problem and, for Vargas Llosa, inappropriate for the Latin American situation. Vargas Llosa realizes what some contemporary

Brazilian intellectuals feared: the European model cannot be successfully applied to the New World. Gall's failure to even arrive at Canudos connotes the impotence of ideological causes, such as the imposition of the Marxists' theory on a reality which does not conform to his own circumstance. He dies defending his anarchistic fin de siècle ideals in a struggle with Rufino, never comprehending Rufino's own set of cultural mores which Gall perpetually disregards with an attitude of superiority. Alien ideas will not survive; Latin America must seek its own solutions.

Gall's noble gesture of aid to the rebels is rendered meaningless and even his articles fail, for we find out after Gall's demise that the underground newspaper with which he corresponded is defunct. He fails as a person, as well. Gall ends up betraying his personal goals when he 'allows his unconscious instinctual desire be unleashed into conscious reality' and rapes Jurema.⁴³ Just as the rape symbolizes the transgression of the norms of one cultural system by an outsider⁴⁴--the European conquest of America--, so too does it show Gall the crusader to be callous and Gall the outsider to be less tolerant of others than of his own flaws. He intellectually rationalizes his contradictory behavior. He does this philosophically with the belief that people are basically victims, shaped by society. He ponders, "In what way will this event [the rape of Jurema] effect his life?"⁴⁵ Gall's concern is directed toward his

own spirit and not to his human victim: "He thought about Jurema. Was she a thinking being? A domestic animal, more likely."⁶⁶ He does more than dismiss the moral implications of his actions, he valorizes them as necessary because, according to his circular logic, only with suffering will men be moved to rebellion which then is the only means to liberation from suffering: "'Now, perhaps, [Jurema] will wake from her lethargy and will discover the injustice.' He thought, 'I am your injustice.' He thought, 'Perhaps I have done her a favor.'"⁶⁷

Vargas Llosa incorporates into his character Galileo Gall the utopianism of Europeans that has existed since the discovery of the New World. Intellectuals have viewed Latin America throughout the history of its development as a homogeneous whole and as the most likely political utopia of the future--the perfect society would be impossible to materialize in old Europe. Gall sees the seeds of utopia developing in the "primitive communism" of Canudos. His intention of instructing the canudenses parallels the desire to transplant theories, institutions and ideas from Europe to America, but without first asking the Latin American people or properly educating them in these ideas. As the myth of utopia has been disproven by history, so Gall's ideal to realize the perfect society at Canudos must also be doomed to failure.

The Conservative Approach

Despite his oligarchical position, the character who surprisingly closest resembles Vargas Llosa's narrator is the baron. He best understands the Canudos situation and although he is an integral part of the problem, amidst the confusion and passion of this historical moment, he always remains the "voice of reason." He explains that the battle wounds resembling European-made explosive bullet holes really came from home-made projectiles of a certain mineral from the region.⁴⁸ The baron accepts the cultural mores and cedes to the inevitable behavior of his sertanejos, such as in the case of Rufino's revenge and the burning of his own estate. More than anyone else, the baron understands that fanaticism is at the root of the Canudos conflict. He is omniscient observer and unwitting participant. The baron takes on the role of spokesman for sertanejo society. Both backlander and city dweller, he has the understanding to speak for his people and the intelligence to perceive the nature of the conflict: the Republic is a disruption for the sertanejo. The best route to return tranquility to the sertão is non-intervention. He says, "These people do not steal or kill or burn property when they sense an order, when they see that the world is organized because no one knows better than they how to respect hierarchies . . . But the Republic destroyed our system with impractical laws,

substituting the principle of obedience with the principle of unfathomable enthusiasms."⁴⁹

In his reflexive-analytical function, the baron enjoys a privileged position of maintaining relations with the other pivotal characters. He discusses politics with Moreira César, Galileo Gall and the myopic journalist, as well as having a deep knowledge of the jagunço participants and even his enemies. In his dialogues with these characters, the baron comes to realize the idealistic dreamings of César and Gall (and the perhaps as idealistic ideas of the journalist), and thus can crystallize his opinions on the fanatical players in this human drama. He is a man of measurable conscience (he loves and respects his wife and in his public dealings he always prefers peaceable solutions) but has the capacity of the objective observer to separate himself emotionally from his surroundings. He is an amateur entomologist, frustrated as a scientist, for his natural bent is to scrutinize insects and people as he sees through the actions of the other characters. For example, he possesses his wife's maid Sebastiana as a scientist who separates himself from his subject of study. His rationalization--that he is sparing his beloved but now deranged wife of uninvited attention by exorcising his bodily desire in their servant--is effective. This rape scene serves to discredit the baron who is now shown to be human with defects like the other characters.⁵⁰

With his mediating aristocratic pragmatism, the baron is an anachronism during Republican times while the world changes around him. He survives because he is a realist--all the idealists fall along the way. The baron succeeds in adapting to the new political situation by giving up some degree of his power and influence. The trajectory of this individual character affirms the novel's message that compromise and not unyielding defiance should be the way of the future.⁵¹

Paradox in the Near-sighted Journalist

In another of his pivotal characters, Vargas Llosa provides for his reader what history does not: an eye-witness and survivor of Canudos with a voice of his own, the near-sighted journalist. This reporter represents not Euclides da Cunha but a combination of the campaign's war correspondents.⁵² Actually, the reporter seems to most closely resemble Manuel Benício in various ways. The myopic is also a native of the region (remember upon César's falling ill this reporter was consulted because he knew the area well) and, like Benício, he has a critical curiosity. Along the campaign the near-sighted reporter asks unpopular questions, for example, about the fate of the jagunço prisoners and the army's practice of conscribing thieves and murderers among their ranks as the army approaches Canudos. His attitude is reminiscent of Benício's critique during his

reporting for which Benício was censored, and of Euclides' later criticism in Os Sertões. Vargas Llosa's journalist is also none of these historical figures because he appears during the second, third, and is unwittingly involved in the final expedition. Instead he has an advantage over the real reporters because he is transformed during the course of the novel from observer to participant.⁵³

Before the end of the campaign, this inquisitive journalist loses the power to communicate (and act as a reporter) when he runs out of paper and ink. This moment initiates a series of transformations from bad to worse: from working reporter, our character is rendered useless as a writer, then he becomes useless as an eye-witness when he loses his eyeglasses. This happened during a sprint while under fire from both camps in the midst of battle. The loss of his glasses, however, represents less the loss of his power of vision and more the unique opportunity to develop a second sight which is more intimate and insightful.⁵⁴ Reality as exposed in this novel is full of deceptions, conspiracies, and suspicions: this character's myopia symbolizes the necessity of blindness in order to see the truth.⁵⁵

It is when our journalist is most vulnerable, i.e. sightless, that he experiences the most radical of his transformations. He is placed in a situation where he must depend on the aid of others. In seeking help he discovers

Jurema (and the midget and other canudenses) who contribute to the interpretation of his reality and help him form more flexibility toward others' ideas. He gains the privileged position of experiencing both sides of an issue, this time as a feeling being instead of pure intellectual. He gains insight into the qualitatively different way that the sertanejos experience their world--not rationally but spiritually. Amongst the rampant narrow-sightedness of fanaticism, he is the only individual to invest in more than one perspective, and so seems to be the best candidate for Canudos historian. But as this ridiculous figure (he is asthmatic, physically weak and a marginalized character) develops loyalty to the "other side" and moves from cynicism to conviction, he necessarily loses relative objectivity for commitment to a cause. His expressed desire after the war to write the Canudos story is paradoxically sabotaged by his personal experiences and allegiances. In this way, the novel undermines the possibility of writing any "real" story and consequently questions the meaning of history.⁵⁶

Fiction over History

The journalist announces his intention to write the Canudos story during a conversation with the knowledgeable baron. His intentions are sincere but they are naive--he explains his project to the baron because no one else so far has listened to him, and even the baron (like the rest of

the nation) would rather forget the entire ordeal. We sense very clearly that the reporter's project is pessimistic. Even if the journalist had the opportunity to record it, his history would be yet another interpretation. We must doubt even this character's ability to record history because historical writing, according to the novel, is subjective, always political, and written with a doctrine.⁵⁷ The near-sighted reporter's desire may seem to open up alternate possibilities of historical interpretation but with the pervasiveness of conspiracy, double-cross and delusion in the novel (and in the Canudos literature) the reader must doubt the possibility of knowledge through history.⁵⁸

Perhaps the only real possibility for understanding is not through history but fiction. Remember that Vargas Llosa's journalist loses his ability to see and thus record the "facts" (which is the task of historian and intellectual). If history cannot capture reality, narrative fiction is a likely substitute. This character acts as a "double" of the author as he channels his frustrated desire to write dramas instead of newspaper reporting into his Canudos project. Vargas Llosa reinforces the idea that the novel is the best possibility for interpreting past events in his stylistic use of the reporter's dialogue with the baron after the war's end. In fact, the entire final (fourth) section of the novel may be considered a semi-autonomous narrative construction that resembles a

novel in itself. This final section of the narrative appears to be orchestrated by the journalist as he relates the last episodes of the war. Vargas Llosa interjects between the journalist's and baron's exchanges other events and dialogues occurring during the last days of battle, which we can interpret as the recountings of our reporter to the baron (with interjections of the baron's own private thoughts and memories of the same post-war time, sparked by the myopic's reminiscences). This section is also a bit more creatively styled than the previous three. There is more confusion of narrative time and space: it begins in present time, some months after the war, as a conversation initiated when the journalist visits his former employer. Then it continues in flashbacks to reveal war time episodes of the journalist and of other canudense characters independent of the journalist. It is only in this section that we notice instances of Vargas Llosa's "telescopic" narrative technique ("vasos comunicantes"), i.e. the montage of two dialogues, one in a present narrative time folding into another evoked from a different time and space.⁵⁹ The reporter fails thus far to write the jaguncos' history but he does achieve narration.

Critics argue that Vargas Llosa's characteristic nihilistic fatalism carries him to the pessimistic conclusion of skepticism over the possibility of comprehension⁶⁰ and that through the plurality of

contradictory views in La guerra each discourse cancels out the others so consequently, history offers no meaning. But these ignore the potential of the reader to overcome the plurality of visions. The reader can construct for him or herself a total vision which is not null but realistically impossible to correctly ascertain through literature, due to the ideological content of any human event in history. The myopic's history will never be written but we may reach a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by increasing perspectives and by opening up to human complexities.⁶¹

The near-sighted journalist's desire to write the "real story" carries another, more political dimension. It is indicative of Vargas Llosa's opinion of the role played by yellow journalism and lies in print in Latin America. Vargas Llosa's reporter plans to disprove other journalistic reports, to "revise the newspapers, all the notices of Canudos . . ." He believes the war ". . . to be a conspiracy in which everyone had participated, a generalized and total misunderstanding."⁶² This conspiracy refers to the journalistic rhetoric and inflammatory language used as weapons during this period of "Republican terror" against the enemy jagunços, portrayed in print as "Hordes of fanatics, bloodthirsty abjects, cannibals of the sertão, degenerates of the race, contemptible monsters, human waste, infamous lunatics, filicides, crazy to the soul."⁶³ It is newspaper reporting that propagates the false story of

Gall's attempt to supply Monarchist arms to Canudos, which served as a rationale for the federal army's intervention. This reflects Vargas Llosa's opinion of journalism as an arm of the powerful to misrepresent current events and to whitewash history.⁶⁴ The power of suggestion lies in the printed page: Vargas Llosa's journalist recounts, for example, that the soldiers "went to see English officers. And they saw them."⁶⁵ The issue of censorship is raised in the novel as César orders the myopic not to release information about his epileptic attack.⁶⁶ The polemic of official (mis)representation and censorship in Latin America is a favorite topic of Vargas Llosa. For him, fiction traditionally occupies a void which "official" history does not fill.⁶⁷

Faith over Revolution

It is significant that the novel concludes with a conselheirista woman prisoner insisting that she saw reformed bandit João Abade borne up to heaven by archangels. The narrative's trajectory is one of hope--the belief that the canudenses' spirit will survive the destruction of their settlement. In one sense, this endorses the importance of the mythic element over factual discourse. Conselheiro is a legendary hero whose resurrection is awaited in the folklore of the sertanejos. Belief in Conselheiro's return bringing spiritual and material salvation is still alive. Vargas

Llosa obviously sympathizes with his sertanejo characters--though he does not idealize them as the Marxists have, he also does not satanize them like the military chronicles--and portrays them as real people. Atypical of Vargas Llosa is the optimistic trajectory marked by the final scene: perhaps there is hope, if not to resolve the centuries-old problems in Latin America, but hope that under the worst circumstances, faith facilitates living.⁶⁸

An Artist's Perspective

Vargas Llosa offers us a perspective on Canudos that comprises the ideas of many of the other discourses discussed in this analysis. He privileges fiction and by doing so, gives himself the artistic freedom to express his opinions in a more explicit way than the authors of the other discourses. Although it is in the artistic realm that humans are allowed to vicariously solve the dilemmas of reality, Vargas Llosa displaces the responsibility of deciding the "truth" of Canudos to his readers. So Vargas Llosa's novel employs a different "tactic," perspectivism, with which to capture the history of Canudos.

Notes

¹ Remember that Benício was both war correspondent (and former military) as well as Canudos sympathizer and is perhaps the only participant with split loyalties in the Canudos campaign. His novel is an arbitrary combination of narrative fiction and historical glosses.

² Georges Lukacs maintains that History, by the nature of its being written down and its significance to the reader, is designed to be a 'prehistory' of the present. The Historical Novel (New York: Humanities Press, 1965) 337.

³ Frank Dauster reduces the paradoxical relationship to a syntagmatic one: History traces the cause/effect relationship in a more linear fashion and reduces complications to show movement in time; versus a paradigmatic one: literature offers a slice of the "complicated fabric" of reality of a determined period. "Aristotle and Vargas Llosa," Hispania, 53, 2 (1970): 273-77.

⁴ Aristotle's Poetics, trans. S.H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang Dramabooks, 1961) 168.

⁵ Terry Eagleton in Criticism and Ideology (London: Humanities Press, 1976) writes that texts give us ideology through imaginary events since their meaning lies not in their material reality but in how they contribute to perpetuating certain processes of signification, 74. Historiography may have History itself as its object regardless of its ideological mode but the literary text produces its own object inseparable from its literary modes, 72-3.

⁶ Many philosophers of history do not admit chance to the category of history. The Canudos military chronicles attribute all results to environmental or logistical factors or human decisions, never to fate or chance.

⁷ E.g. Gonçalves' manipulations of Gall in a conspiracy attempt or the actions taken by the jagunços to eradicate the military offensive.

⁸ Remember that Gall appeared in Bahia because his ship happened to shipwreck off its coast and also that the pivotal character Jurema conveniently happens to connect the lives of Rufino, Gall, the circus dwarf and the myopic journalist.

⁹ Vargas Llosa, 358, my translation.

¹⁰ Metatext refers to anything related to a literary text, outside of the text itself. Here, the historical metatext refers to the literature on Canudos.

¹¹ In Homenaje a Mario Vargas Llosa, Helmy F. Giacomán and José Miguel Oviedo, eds. (Long Island City, N.Y.: Las Américas, 1972) 157, my translation.

¹² Vargas Llosa, 288.

¹³ Vargas Llosa, 195.

¹⁴ Vargas Llosa, 189.

¹⁵ From D.J.R. Bruckner, "Instead of a Movie", N.Y. Times Book Review, v. 89, 12 Aug 1984: 24.

¹⁶ E.g., the city versus the sertão, civilization against barbarity, progress and modernization opposes anachronistic tradition, the future confronts the past, "reason" tries to suppress "insanity."

¹⁷ Roger Kaplan, "Beyond Magical Realism," Commentary, 78D (1984): 66.

¹⁸ Vargas Llosa in Ricardo A. Setti's Conversas com Vargas Llosa (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1986) 51.

¹⁹ Antonio Cornejo Polar, "La guerra del fin del mundo: Sentido (y sin-sentido) de la historia," Hispanamérica, 31 (1982): 10-11.

²⁰ Beatriz Jaguaribe de Mattos, "The Totalizing Narrative," (Stanford: PhD. Diss., 1986) 180.

²¹ Vargas Llosa's novel is consistent with his theory of literature: Art should not be the instrument of a political dogma nor should it suggest any real solutions but rather it should demonstrate the problems existent in reality. Especially in Latin America, Vargas Llosa insists, the author has a social responsibility to reveal the reality that has been censored in the press, media and universities. But from Vargas Llosa's text, like from any other text politically committed or not, can be gleaned a certain ideology. Vargas Llosa's explicit message in La guerra is anti-fanaticism but his implicit prescription is its opposite: moderation and compromise.

²² Vargas Llosa reveals his thoughts on politics in a videotaped interview from the lecture series Writers in Conversation (Roland Collection of Films on Art, n.d.). Vargas Llosa has been vocal on the subject of Latin American politics. His personal political stance has evolved from socialist--a believer in the Cuban revolution--to disillusionment with the revolution to a more conservative view. At this standing in his personal life he now supports the democratic system, against any form of dictatorship (including the leftist type), permitting the coexistence of differing points of view and self-criticism. In "Entre Tocayos," Vuelta, 8, 92 (1984): 50, he says, "To defend the

democratic option for Latin America is not to exclude any reform, even the most radical, for the solution of our problems but rather to ask that they be made through governments born of elections and that they guarantee a fair state in which no one is discriminated against because of his ideas." My translation.

²³ Georges Lukacs maintains that to contemporize a past event, it is necessary to understand the social and human motives behind the feelings and actions of the time. To attain this authentic historical spirit the novelist should portray culturally significant events and relationships between characters; the historically significant characters should play minor roles. The Historical Novel (New York: Humanities Press, 1965) 42-45. Vargas Llosa fictionalizes his historical characters and "historicizes" his fictional characters by using cultural types.

²⁴ Few of La guerra's characters are specifically historical but instead are what Lukacs calls "mediocre heroes:" they are pivotal to the action which envelops them but do not cause or serve as catalysts to the action. The story is constructed around the web of experiences of these insider victim-participants. Some minor characters represent certain ideas available in the Canudos literature: padre Joaquim, inspired by the real vicar of Cumbe, represents a type of errant priest of the sertão; Monarchist Gumúcio cites the murder of his sister Adelinha Isabel by a slave with resonances of the positivistic prejudice of inferiority and barbarity of the black race; the Adelinha episode is reminiscent of Brazilian colonial sadistic tendencies developed in Freyre's theories.

²⁵ Vargas Llosa, 19.

²⁶ Vargas Llosa, 11, my translation.

²⁷ Vargas Llosa, 117, my translation.

²⁸ Religion is represented in Vargas Llosa's work as obsession or oppression as it reflects an integral part of the Latin American experience. Oviedo quotes Vargas Llosa in "Historia de la historia de la historia:" ". . . I believe that religion is something that is intimately tied to our [i.e. Latin American] experience: if we are fanatics, the reason probably is that we come from a certain intolerant religious tradition to which we still belong." Escandalar, (Elmhurst, N.J.) 3, 1 (1980): 85, my translation.

²⁹ Vargas Llosa's "totalizante" novel implies synthesis of all the levels of reality--sensorial, mythic, onyric,

metaphysical and mystic. For an explanation of the "novela totalizante," see, for example, Jose Luis Martin, La narrativa de Vargas Llosa, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974) 72.

³⁰ It is only in fiction, as Oviedo notes, that space is devoted to the 'defeated,' including the other novels written about Canudos. Since the historical annals left this void it must be filled in the realm of imagination. "Historia de la historia de la historia," 83-4.

³¹ Vargas Llosa, 164.

³² Vargas Llosa, 167.

³³ Vargas Llosa, 167.

³⁴ Vargas Llosa, 112-13, my translation.

³⁵ Gall's function as interpreter of historic reality is of an epistolar character, according to Leopoldo M. Bernucci, "La guerra del fin del mundo de Vargas Llosa," (Univ. of Michigan: PhD. Diss., 1986) 145. Gall's letters to his libertarian press function as a gloss of Brazilian history, nature, ethnic origin, class system, culture, etc. to the European audience and so also to the reader. Furthermore, the letters are in pamphlet style, a previously determined rhetoric which admits a previously constructed ideology for the interpretation of events, Ana Maria Gazzolo, "Mario Vargas Llosa: La guerra del fin del mundo," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 382 (1982): 182. Gall's interpretation of Brazilian reality is that of a outsider--so much of Brazil's self image historically has been partially a reflection from the outside. Gall is the most openly ideological of all Vargas Llosa's characters in La guerra and also the most inappropriate for the narrative setting.)

³⁶ Vargas Llosa, 17, my translation.

³⁷ I.e., the jagunço practices free love.

³⁸ Vargas Llosa, 41, my translation.

³⁹ Vargas Llosa, 43.

⁴⁰ Vargas Llosa, 68

⁴¹ Vargas Llosa, 199

⁴² Angel Rama, "La guerra del fin del mundo: Una obra maestra del fanatismo artístico," Eco, 246 (1982): 611.

⁴³ Vargas Llosa, 82.

⁴⁴ Patricia G. Montenegro, "La relatividad de perspectivas en La guerra del fin del mundo," Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, 10, 20 (1984): 318.

⁴⁵ Vargas Llosa, 85.

⁴⁶ Vargas Llosa, 84.

⁴⁷ Vargas Llosa, 84. Even 'simple' Rufino sees through the inconsistency between Gall's humanitarian rhetoric and his behavior. Ref. to p. 225.

⁴⁸ Vargas Llosa, 166.

⁴⁹ Vargas Llosa, 165, my translation. Let us not forget here that the baron's prescription to continue the status-quo would also benefit his own situation.

⁵⁰ The baron's rape scene is open to interpretation. It has been viewed by critics as unnecessary to the action of the novel. Perhaps Vargas Llosa allows his most sensible and practical character to 'condemn' himself (morally) with this despicable action because the author feels the need to expose the injustice of the feudal power structure which the baron represents. It definitely reinforces the reality of the continuance of slavery in rural Brazil after Emancipation. The baron's rape scene is emblematic of the conquest of America by Europeans and indicative of the colonialist mentality which persists in modern Latin America.

⁵¹ Ironically, the only real winners in this conflict are not the jaquinos or the army but the most clever politicians--Gonçalves et al--as the same power structures continues under different names.

⁵² The myopic journalist is not the "double" of reporter Euclides da Cunha. We sense the presence of Euclides, however, throughout Vargas Llosa's text. Remnants of the personality and text of Euclides can be traced to the narrator--the description of the sertanejo, the sertão and the interaction between man and environment--, to Gall's belief in positivist science as a partial solution, to the profession of the myopic and his aspiration to write his own version of the Canudos story, and to the characterization of some of the historical figures like Moreira César. Euclides is a pervasive presence but not a determinant actor in Vargas Llosa's novel.

⁵³ The interplay between fiction and history is interesting. The failure of the historical figures stems from their vision--though Vargas Llosa's César can only see what he expects to see at Canudos, the real journalists did experience an emotional change throughout the rising and ebbing moments of battle (See chapter one) but the narrative figure of the myopic takes a dramatic step from non-committant observer to the emotional investment of a crusader.

⁵⁴ Montenegro suggests also that the breaking of the myopic's glasses is symbolic of the uselessness of the technology of modern Brazil in the traditional and spiritual world of the sertão, 319.

⁵⁵ For Vargas Llosa, shortsightedness is a metaphor for the intellectual who is blind to present reality with his/her long range plans. In his videotaped interview, Writers in Conversation, Vargas Llosa explains that the journalist's eyesight is symbolic, for intellectuals are blind not to "see," i.e. understand an event and so are obliged to ask each other for help in interpreting their reality.

⁵⁶ Our journalist expresses the contradiction between empiric and subjective experience in the comment: "Now I know that at one time only nine cannons were firing against Canudos and that never were there more than 16 at the same time . . . But that night they seemed to be a thousand . . ." Vargas Llosa, 318.

⁵⁷ "Like the rest of history," comments the baron, "numbers are something that historians and politicians reduce and augment according to their doctrines and the advantage they can take of them." Vargas Llosa, 289, my translation.

⁵⁸ Vargas Llosa's doubt that real history is possible in writing is presaged in the text at two moments: when the myopic runs out of ink and when conselheirista scribe León runs out of paper.

⁵⁹ See Vargas Llosa, 317 and 414.

⁶⁰ E.g. Cornejo and Mattos.

⁶¹ Compare the near-sighted reporter's changing awareness through experience to Gall's static misreading from predetermined interpretation.

⁶² Vargas Llosa, 269-70, my translation.

⁶³ Vargas Llosa, 270, my translation.

⁶⁴ Nor are Latin American intellectuals the hope, in Vargas Llosa's opinion, for these are characterized by an inflexible attitude, a lack of critical intellectual process, and an inability to judge the feasibility of different ideological doctrines. Deception, misdirection and misunderstanding dominate modern Latin American politics. Ignacio Solares, "An Interview with Mario Vargas Llosa," Partisan Review, 51, 3 (1984): 351-52.

⁶⁵ Vargas Llosa, 313, my translation.

⁶⁶ Vargas Llosa, 165.

⁶⁷ Vargas Llosa in La utopia arcaica (Cambridge: Center of Latin American Studies, Univ. of Cambridge, 1978) as in other sources, explains that the function of literature in Latin America is often to fill the void left by the censorship of radio, television, newspapers and Universities for it is considered to be a "safe" vehicle due to the prevalence of illiteracy, even among leaders. Fiction replaces official forms of communication as a testimony to oppression, injustice and exploitation.

⁶⁸ In other Vargas Llosa novels, environmental determinism is more apparent. Fatalism is characteristic of author Vargas Llosa as his characters attempt to express their will and overcome their circumstance but are doomed to failure. The sertanejos are doomed by the annals of history but Vargas Llosa allows the force of their faith to raise them above their circumstances. These individuals are impotent in their idealism but the tragedy of their situation is only recognized by outsiders.

CONCLUSIONS

New Trends

It is to Euclides' credit--or discredit--that a revision in the historical discourse of the Canudos episode has been hindered, because his Os Sertões is privileged as a sacred text or Brazilian icon. General histories of Brazil which include the early Republican period use Euclides da Cunha's interpretation as their main and often only source to recount the Canudos episode. Some more modern versions prefer Rui Facó's materialist interpretation as their source but also rely on Os Sertões for their information. Dantas' biography of Antônio Conselheiro (1966) still repeats the ethnological ideas of Rodrigues' insanity theory. The overly reduced accounts in Brazilian history books lack critical depth for an understanding of the Canudos event, especially since they sometimes repeat stories which the literature has proven false (such as the charge that Conselheiro led the life of a penitent because he had murdered his mother or that he may have murdered his wife). But they bring home an interesting characteristic of the literature on Canudos. There is a lack of critical discernment as legends are passed on as facts, the biggest

obstacle of which is the legacy of Euclides da Cunha. The major challenge placed before a modern historian is the decanonization of Os Sertões, for the bulk of subsequent writing on Canudos reacts, pro or con, to his Os Sertões as Euclides has dominated each reinterpretation of Canudos that followed him. In fact, there has been a general call for the re-evaluation of the history of Canudos which works out the problem of the influence of Euclides and other obviously ideological sources and overcomes the mythifying process of the literature to date.¹

In Ataliba Nogueira's "revision," written in the light of Conselheiro's newly discovered manuscript, we note the seeds of a new trend in interpretation which remains to be developed in the Canudos context. We hope that this new trend in historiography will view the history of Canudos as more an interplay between individual actions (contingent yet determining factors)--like the wood-retrieving incident when judge Leoni contrived to implicate his enemy Conselheiro in police action--and natural developments (pre-existing situations) as contributing causal factors. Silva and Carneiro's rendition of the Canudos campaign in O Poder Civil, for example, describes the Canudos settlement as the result of a natural development and the war as the snowball effect of power plays between the Church and certain politicians. They address the necessity for a revision since Canudos history was originally written by those too

influenced by the epoch. Historian Robert Levine is currently heading a project to modernize the history of Canudos. In his 1988 article "'Mud-Hut Jerusalem:' Canudos Revisited," Levine reconstructs the canudenses' activity (largely missing from official history) and the composition of the settlement. His research includes sources largely ignored, unsought and overshadowed by the weight of Euclides' text and its dichotomizing paradigms of civilization and barbarity. Levine's intent is to unmask the intentions of the parties involved in the conflict. He examines economic factors, (e.g. labor relations and migrations describe a poor, not prosperous town,) religious, psychological and political factors, such as Geremoabo and the archbishop's collusion against Conselheiro, who had maintained allegiances to his Vianista party bosses. Contemporary writers influenced by the passion of the moment drew exaggerated pictures of fanatics, but now, removed in time, it seems possible to speak of Canudos in more moderate terms. Conselheiro is depicted as orthodox and not heretical or apocalyptic (e.g. in Pessar's semiotic analysis), and the phenomenon is described in a more natural context. Overall, we note a trend toward investigating and reconstructing a persistent absence throughout the previous interpretations--the canudenses' side of the story.

We also notice a tendency in recent historiography to over-compensate for the biased accounts of military

chronicles by portraying the defeated canudenses as victims or heroes. Characterization of the canudenses by their sympathizers projects an image of sanctified peace-loving individuals. We prefer a more realistic portrayal of both sides, for both the conselheiristas and the army had their heroes and their criminals. For example, the testimony of Honório Vila Nova relates that the canudenses had heard that army soldiers were in Uauá so they decided to assault them while sleeping,² not that they were attacked by the soldiers while on pilgrimage--this was not the act of willing victims. We should also keep in mind that, just as in the case of the numerous army desertions, many townspeople escaped from Canudos instead of giving up their lives for a religious ideal.

José Arás, who had lived in Canudos until he left during difficult times when conselheiristas murdered the influential Mota family for suspicion of spying for the enemy,³ wrote a history in verse, História de Antônio Conselheiro.⁴ Arás' insight shows the conselheiristas to be as capable of violent behavior as the Republican soldiers. In fact, his verses and interviews give us a glimpse into the possibility of a more balanced reconstruction of history where both sides were equalled in war crimes, in propagandizing, in a unilateral vision of the world, and more importantly, in the need to justify their cause through ideology--Republican on one side and Biblical on the other.

The two sides shared participation in the dialectic of the Canudos war but each stemming from a different polemic--political versus religious--a dichotomy reflected as well in their rhetoric: the army shouted "Viva a República!" (reminiscent of the French Vendée) while the conselheiristas rejoined "Viva o Bom Jesus!," as they identified their cause with that of Christ's. Each side supplied its own justifications for its actions and made metonymical associations couched in either political or religious terms but counterpointed to extreme opposites during the emotion of the conflict: the Republic was the jagunços' antiChrist but Canudos was the Republic's foe, a Monarchist stronghold. Each in their own way were perceived to threaten the existence of the other.

Filling the Void

By examining the developments of the Canudos war we can conclude that there was no diplomacy or mediation effected between the canudenses and the Republican representatives,⁵ i.e. there was no dialogue or negotiation of meanings between the opposing sides prior to military action. The absence of mediation translates in the literature as a void, represented as a polarization of dichotomies. The polarization results from definition by negation. This functions in the political, cultural and economic realms--Monarchism opposes Republicanism, the sertão is what

is not the littoral, and an experiment in socialism is unable to exist in a capitalistic universe. According to the authors' perspective, opposing moral implications accompany each of these categories. That is, because Republicanism is the driving political force and ideology of the military, its enemy is defined as its negation or opposite--Monarchism. These poles also connote the opposing forces of good and evil. The materialists prefer to invert this relationship to describe the sertanejo "oppressed" as representing the forces of good, in a struggle against the "evil" forces of the dominant classes. Brazilian intellectuals interpret this same dichotomy as the littoral (and all that it connotes--progress, modernization and civilization) which in turn defines the limits of the sertão (barbarity, atavism) as its negation. With the naming of these entities comes the problem of the reification of concepts⁶ into static bounded categories and the mythification of progress.

Another residual situation we see with these dichotomous models of interpretation is that they marginalize the voice of the folk participants, the "silent witnesses to history."⁷ The social sciences' interpretation of the Canudos phenomenon, despite their original pretense to apprehend the "native point of view," also participates in the elitist discourse. They rely heavily upon "official" history for their sources and most ignore the domain of

folklore as well as existing eye-witness testimony in the formulation of their opinions. The littoral/sertão dichotomy passes on through their literature as a division of "modern" and "primitive" peoples. Vargas Llosa's novel translates this dichotomization into a plot of conflict between fanaticisms.

The models that each discourse employs to interpret reality are necessarily limiting. It is only after we step outside of the ideologically generated paradigms that we are able to critique them. This is what we propose to do in the following section, to step outside of each paradigm and, borrowing from the margins of other discourses, suggest alternative ideas that disclose the aporia inherent in hermeneutic interpretation.

Alternatives: History

The "mission" of historical discourse is to reconstruct what was happening at Canudos, the development of the Conselheiro's movement, and its results. But the assumption that any written history may be taken as true knowledge about the past may actually be an impossible task, since historians must grapple with both their sources and the "facts" these offer, as well as their own theory of history and their own ideological bias. History, like fictional and scientific literatures, necessarily involves interpretation or we would not be able to make sense of it.

To investigate the history of the Canudos war we are forced to take recourse to the military chronicles and contemporary news reports. Since they were authored by participants, we cannot call the chronicles a typical historical reconstruction or "retrodiction"--prediction backward in time.⁸ They project a biased rendition, the history of the "victors." They document the movements of the war but also make assumptions about the enemy. In their attempt to understand the conselheiristas they are destined to failure, for it is as difficult for them to penetrate their enemy's intentions as it was difficult for the army to penetrate the sertão. To rationalize genocide, the literature of the participant-historians polarized the historical phenomenon into dichotomies. The military chronicles suppressed the discourse of the victims by opposing it to their own discourse. The canudenses are the enemy, described as the negative of the victor: Monarchist, cowardly, unpatriotic, and heretical, for example.

The historical circumstance which led the conselheiristas into conflict with the "forces of the Republic" is made of individuals and their actions--we need to describe the dynamics between these actors. Thus far, interpretations of the Canudos phenomenon have concentrated on either causal or "finalist" explanation.⁹ That is, earlier historical interpretations of Canudos develop the idea that an existing set of circumstances--environment and

race--allowed the Canudos events to occur, and even caused them. Later, finalist or teleological explanation involves people's individual or collective actions which, in combination with certain pre-existing circumstances, will lead to determined events--i.e. class struggle. However, theorist Karl Popper¹⁰ conceives of two basic tasks of history which supplement each other: the disentanglement of causal threads and the description of concurrent and causally unrelated "accidental" events. Both are interwoven as each event is at the same time typical--i.e. one can apply a deductive method of causal explanation--and unique. Events in history have dual characteristics: the arbitrary element as well as general laws are necessary to apprehend an event.¹¹ If we apply both typical and unique elements to the Canudos reconstruction, we would have to consider the inter-relations between major and minor actors in their historical context.

We know that a moment arrived when the Conselheiro and company were perceived as dangerous due to evolving circumstances which hurled them into national politics. Previous to that moment they had maintained relationships that were both friendly and inimical. First impressions portray Conselheiro as harmless. Bahian police commander Durval Viera de Aguiar could only consider Antônio Conselheiro as inoffensive when he notes seeing him in 1882.¹² But we also know that some amount of trouble had

been brewing before news of Canudos hit the state or national scene. State police documents record skirmishes previous to the Tucano incident over burning tax edicts. This act is interpreted as the first sign of civil disobedience committed by the Conselheiro. But actually, in the Tavares interviews, one witness describes the incident as more a spontaneous reaction of the people at market in Natuba without the counsel of Conselheiro, and that Conselheiro afterwards offered his protection.¹³

Once Conselheiro moved into the town of Belo Monte (Canudos) to settle his increasing number of followers and to build a church, not all the neighboring property owners were his enemies. Letters transmitted from Canudos show Conselheiro depended on the charity of neighboring property owners for construction materials. However, local politicking involved Conselheiro in a power struggle between feuding factions and therefore he attracted the animosity of one particular coronel. Letters penned by the baron of Geremoabo during the war¹⁴ only make reference to the damage to local properties perpetrated by the army, despite the accusation that the jagunços had been pillaging the area (which had served as justification for military action). Physical threat to properties was not a danger. These letters, however, hint at a political conspiracy spearheaded against governor Viana. Thus far, Canudos historians have generally not credited the role played by local politicians.

They do not investigate the confabulation of governor Viana's enemies to blame the Canudos "problem" and its lengthy "solution" on the questionable loyalty of the governor to the new Republic.¹⁵

Conselheiro maintained an ambivalent relationship with the Church. Despite mutually beneficial arrangements with local vicars including padre Rabino who serviced the Canudos settlement, the Church hierarchy viewed Antônio Conselheiro as a threat to the Church's authority and popularity because he was preaching an ultra-conservative doctrine, which many sertanejos found more attractive especially when compared to the wayward behavior of many priests. It was this animosity which culminated in the archbishop's mission to friar Marciano. Individuals such as Geremoabo, the archbishop and judge Leoni exemplify the "unique elements" vital to the reconstruction of Canudos history.

Intellectuals

We have seen that contemporary reporters and intellectuals reinforced the sentiments of the military chronicles through subtler means. Despite their pretended sympathy toward the canudenses described in their discourse as "victims" of fratricide, they rationalized the necessity of the war by tracing the origin of the sertanejos' misfortune to the constants of race and environment. Intellectuals like Euclides da Cunha followed the

"scientific" method to trace the causes of the effect--the Canudos conflict. If history is the process of filling in an absent cause, these contemporary Brazilian intellectuals attempted this through a theory of climatic and geographic determinism where laws of nature and its social organizations determine the process of history over man and his creativity. Human institutions are not free inventions of human reason but effects of natural causes,¹⁶ as consistent with race theory according to which both environment and the nature of man are determining factors. They discovered in their analysis of Canudos that the problem lay in the existence of two separate cultures following incongruent paces of development. Historical change, to be natural, would evolve differently in the sertanejo culture, influenced by and reacting to different stimuli. These included the negative influences of mixed bloods so the pattern of development in the sertão would be incompatible with the concurrent historical course of progress of the littoral. The positivists appealed to the same dichotomization as the contemporary historians in their valorization of all that the Republic symbolized: progress over its negation, primitivism.

The intellectuals' justification of the "fratricide" revolved around the question of race. Today as we consider the composition of the Canudos settlement, we need to overcome the stereotyping of Euclides' idealized mestizo.

We find evidence that there was a heterogeneous racial component ranging from pure whites, blacks, and Indians to mixed bloods of differing degrees. The report taken by Lélis Piedade of the Canudos prisoners¹⁷ lists the physical type and race of each woman prisoner, a group which comprised a seemingly even distribution of blacks, mulattas, dark skins, caboclas and whites. Historian Calasans documents the existence of a black community in Canudos¹⁸ made up of runaway slaves from before Abolition and freed slaves afterwards. He also mentions the existence of Indians living along the border areas of Canudos. These Indians, with their bows and arrows, participated in the fighting.¹⁹

Social Sciences

Most anthropologists and sociologists who examine Canudos with the intention of describing, categorizing and universalizing this social phenomenon presume a synchronic or ahistorical approach which attempts to overcome the preconceptions of inequality between cultures in denying evolution toward a chimerical standard of "superiority." They do not succeed in this but rather find alternative models through which to formulate their characterization of the sertanejos as "primitive." More importantly, they base their interpretations on a synecdochic relationship which seeks to explain the Canudos phenomenon by its association

with other messianic or millenarian movements. The premise resides on its identification as belonging to one of these two categories.

The actual extent of Conselheiro's messianism is something that should be reconsidered. Conselheiro himself denied that he was a divine emissary and no testimony in the literature contradicts that fact. He insisted on the title Pilgrim (Peregrino) and not Bom Jesus. He admitted to no miracles even though belief in miracles was an integral part of Church doctrine. The image of Canudos that can be reconstructed from historical sources is one of traditionalism. Antônio Conselheiro preached only against the immoral behaviors of some of the clergy, and he was involved in local politics; he was no iconoclast. He received permission from many vicars to do his work: construction of churches, cemeteries, and dams. He himself performed no sacraments but encouraged his people to abide by Church law and moral doctrine. After a review of the few existing interviews with Canudos survivors, one message becomes clear: the followers thought of Antônio Conselheiro as a good man doing good religious works. He promised nothing more than to construct churches and cemeteries in this life, and promised salvation for the righteous in the afterlife.²⁰

The miraculous element attributed to Conselheiro, not by his closest followers, but by outsiders, is the subject

of the anthropological studies. But folk stories and verses about the Canudos conflict mythicize both sides: Moreira César attains hyperbolic proportions as the feared "Cortepescoço" (Beheader) while Antônio Conselheiro promises his people redemption after the apocalypse initiated by the "lei do Cão" (Satan's law) of the AntiChrist, the Republic. This may be interpreted to mean that something extraordinary was happening in the sertão--the Canudos war--, but not that the sertanejos ascribed to the literal supernatural significance. To understand the dynamics from which this apocalyptic phenomenon originated, we can turn to Conselheiro's doctrine.

To help clarify the question of Conselheiro's belief and preachings, there are two manuscripts authored by Antônio Conselheiro. His Apontamentos dos Preceitos da Divina Lei de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo, para a Salvação dos Homens attests to Conselheiro's religious views. In Antônio Conselheiro e Canudos: Revisão Histórica, Ataliba Nogueira published Conselheiro's other manuscript, full of quotations from the Horas Marianas (prayer book) and a sermon "Tempestades que se Levantam no Coração de Maria" which addresses the nature of Conselheiro's Monarchist doctrine. A third document thought to be important to Conselheiro is the Missão Abreviada, obsessed with sins of the flesh, demons and eternal damnation.²¹ Conselheiro's example of extreme fasting and other such behaviors may easily have

originated from this text. The "primitive" Catholic standards of the Missão Abreviada describe an extreme morality, more akin to Puritanism than the excesses of many Church religious of the time. It was full of images of death, heaven, hell, the Final Judgement, i.e. "fire and brimstone" rhetoric, while it preached a strict and threatening message which promised salvation to the few who abided by a strict moral code. It warned of the Anti-Christ (perhaps later associated by the conselheiristas with the Republic) and it preached an apocalyptic message. The denomination of apocalyptic may have been associated with Conselheiro's movement because of the commonality of preachings about the final day of judgement among sertanejo missionaries and beatos.

The profile of Conselheiro's preachings that these documents suggest is of an ultra-conservative Catholic. From the Apontamentos which quotes the Bible, especially the New Testament, seem to come the seeds of Conselheiro's doctrine. Excerpts transcribed from the Bible revolve around the ten commandments and the life and words of Christ. Conselheiro emulated Christ's life of wandering, preaching and fasting. Included in the manuscript is an admonishment against coveting women, which perhaps led to Conselheiro's reputed practice of averting his eyes in the presence of any woman. It also records a description of judgement day from Christ's preachings which may be the

origin and extent of Conselheiro's millenarianism. Other advice included stressing the sanctity of the sacraments of which marriage is one.²²

Marxists

The first concerted attempt to "revise" the history of Canudos is made by the Marxists, but it is in direct response to the military chronicles. They challenge and, in a parallel characterization, invert the heroes to culprits. According to their class struggle theory, the Canudos participants are self-determining actors effecting a revolution of sorts. The only true "revolution" is the reversal of the conceptualization of the history of Canudos. The Marxist theory of history portrayed here is determinist, like the role of nature in the intellectual discourse: in this case, social revolution is the natural and logical result of class struggle within the capitalist infrastructure. It is also a theory as utopic as the apocalyptic ideology credited to the jagunços by the social scientists.

Other sources that refer to the functioning of Canudos settlement contradict the Marxists' assumption of an "anachronistic"²³ socialist utopia. We read in Barreto, for example, that a social differentiation existed among the canudenses: certain residents lived in tile-roofed houses indicating status; beggars still existed in the town

alongside wealthier residents who retained private property; successful businessmen attracted resentment from townspeople; and certain members enjoyed more prestige.²⁴ Contrary to the concept of egalitarianism, no evidence suggests a significant variation in Canudos from the traditional Brazilian patronage system of social relations. As stated earlier, Conselheiro's religious ideology most likely did not deviate from the ultra-conservative Catholicism of his simple sertanejo followers. Canudos was set up under a hierarchical system consistent with the rest of rural Brazil: Conselheiro's patriarchal role did not differ politically from that of a bishop within the Catholic Church, for he collected and distributed donations, i.e. the community 'pot', supervised the religious construction, maintained relations with influential people outside the settlement and retained supreme authority over the moral behavior of his people. The organization in Canudos also reflected the Christian hierarchy: in the religious realm Jesus led his apostles, and his apostles and priests guided their flock. In this way, the Conselheiro led his own apostles, the Guarda Católica and his deacons, beatos and designated officials, administered to the general community. God then rules over both--Jesus and the Conselheiro.

Examination of survivors' comments about the settlement suggest that any collectivity was of a purely religious origin, in the form of charity.²⁵ Abelardo Montenegro in

his Antônio Conselheiro describes Canudos as an active and prosperous center of commerce under great expansion. He depicts strict standards: those accused of crimes were sent to outside authorities, no free love or drinking was tolerated, and certain religious obligations like fasting on Church calendar days were mandatory. Conselheiro's authority was supreme, which disallows any democratic or socialist principles, and each family had the right to retain its own livestock and plot for cultivation, which puts a check on any truly communistic life style.²⁶

The interplay of heterogeneous elements in the historical development of events surrounding Canudos and in the composition of the settlement escapes the Marxist interpretation as well as "official" history. For example, the sertanejos who moved to Canudos were attracted there for both religious and economic reasons. Belief ranks high as Conselheiro's reputation as charismatic leader served to attract an already mobilized segment of a poverty stricken population in the direction of Canudos. But religion was not the only motivation, as testimony of participants reveals that Antônio Conselheiro did not force religious obligations on his people and that not all fasted or attended religious ceremonies.²⁷ Some hoped to share in the prosperity of the Canudos community. In the face of hardship elsewhere, the hope of economic possibilities would logically attract population growth.²⁸

Kinship and religious ties to the Conselheiro through his patronage in baptism played a role that goes unmentioned elsewhere. It was customary to request religious patronage of such a spiritually endowed personage as Conselheiro to be godparent to newborns. Baptism established ties of a religious familial type where Conselheiro would be responsible for the (spiritual) welfare of the family.²⁹ Throughout his beatismo, Conselheiro must have established many such bonds that encouraged the migration from the north to Canudos. We should not eliminate any of the factors involved in the complex Canudos situation: the economic attraction of a prosperous town in the sertão--place of unemployment, agricultural decline and drought--, the cohesion of the traditional sertanejo belief system, and political tensions, each of which worked to aggravate the other.

Fiction

Hyperbolic characterization in the Canudos literature is overcome, ironically enough, in fiction. It is in Vargas Llosa's novel that we enter into the psyche of the conselheiristas and the Republican soldiers to discover that both are slaves to a fanatical cause and all individuals are, above all, human; each with his or her own strengths and defects. Narrative fiction is also where the problematic of interpretation in history is raised. Vargas

Llosa's historical novel theorizes the impossibility of objective history, and the privileging of fiction over "factual" discourse. Philosopher and historiographer R.G. Collingwood has maintained that since there is no absolute objectivity in history, reconstructing narrative history is similar in many ways to writing a historical novel; with such tasks as selection, construction, omitting, judging and criticizing, the author is his own authority. Historian Becker likens the writing of history to selective memory.³⁰ Hayden White reinforces the hegemony of the literary realm over the historical, for all historians, especially from different epochs, may employ the same set of facts to tell very different stories. He emphasizes the role of imagination in the construction of the historian's interpretation as faithful documentation is not a realistic expectation in narration.³¹

Vargas Llosa's point of departure in the formation of his novel was a historical anecdote: the Canudos movement and war. What fascinated this novelist was the drama of the historical episode.³² In the novel, the author makes a statement about Latin American politics: individual characters lose control to circumstances and the manipulations of politicians. Combine the dramatic moment with ideological projection and Vargas Llosa's conspiracy twist is the result. The collusion of character Epimondas Gonçalves against the Monarchists through deceiving Galileo

Gall is invention. But it serves as a device to introduce Gall and the ideology he represents: the European metaphor. Vargas Llosa proposes the inadequacy of the European solution to the American context.

Romanticization, National Myths and Degenerates

In defining national identity and Brazil's trajectory for the future through its history, the Canudos literature is divided into the two extremes of negative self-image and meufanismo³³, which may well be a reaction against that image. There seems to be a play between an external vision of Brazil projected from Europe (and the United States) and Brazilian self-interpretation which is often a reflection of the former. We notice in the Canudos literature national definition through the European metaphor (including Western thought which describes the social scientific analysis) or rejection of the European model. Latin American intellectuals insist on the inappropriateness of implanting European metaphor, but most of them assimilate it even unconsciously in their analysis of the Latin American situation: Canudos' "counter-revolution" was paralleled with the French "Vendée"; positivism prescribed solutions for the problem of the sertão while capitalism provided a goal toward which to change semi-feudal Brazilian society; Conselheiro's movement was designed after communistic

egalitarian ideas originating with Thomas More or was interpreted as a manifestation of Sebastianism.

Intellectuals turned their gaze toward outside of Brazil in their quest for self-definition because they devalued what they saw as their own. Euclides's essay was intended to be a scientific rationalization against the inferiority complex that the European standard of racial and intellectual superiority forced on his developing nation. Despite Euclides' idealization of the Brazilian prototype, Dain Borges³⁴ has been able to trace the figure of the Brazilian as a degenerate throughout Brazilian literature from turn-of-the-century biological and psychiatric theories to Freyre's breakdown of the patrimonial system to modern works of Brazilian literature. He concludes that the theme of degeneration persists because Brazil has not yet formed a cohesive stable national identity. We maintain that this negative image is at least partially incorporated from mirroring outside opinion and from the Brazilian desire to emulate its more successful foreign role models. Counter to this is the influence of neufanismo which denies the existence of any negative elements in Brazilian history. Burns' A History of Brazil, however, comments on the tendency in Latin American historiography to cover up disagreeable aspects by ignoring the violent moments of Brazilian historical evolution, citing the Canudos, Juazeiro and Contestado incidents.³⁵

We find in the Canudos literature that Brazilians define their own history as a series of competing fanaticisms and attempts at domination through both violent and non-violent means: elimination (through armed conflict as in the Republican destruction of the Canudos settlement); indoctrination (as in propaganda of the socialist type) or subjugation. National consolidation has not been achieved except through national myth: the search for the mythical past in history led Euclides and his contemporaries to the native colonial Indian mixed-blood, the sertanejo, but their emblem of nationality is also portrayed as a degenerate type.³⁶ History here is entrenched in circular logic instead of a progressive one as it returns to a mythic past in order to justify the status quo. It is not until recently, in the case of Canudos history, that such romanticism is beginning to be overcome. As has been illustrated, a new version of this history is overdue since it seems any modernization must be iconoclastic in nature as it must resist the influence of Euclides' sacred text.

Modernizing the History of Canudos

Many theorists concede the continual necessity of modernizing history.³⁷ The appeal of modernizing the interpretation of Canudos is supported by relativism in history, as are the various images that we see in the different discourses thus analyzed. Since it is the present

(of the historian and his or her culture) that shapes measures of critical judgement in historical writing, each new period "rewrites" its own past; new perceptions require new solutions.

The contemporary American school of historiography has engendered a theory of subjective relativism in historical discourse, also referred to as "presentism." The presentists consider historical representation to be a symbolic reconstruction of the historian's mind and not a part of independent objective reality. So history "must be rewritten regularly to express the altered viewpoint of succeeding generations . . . Since the age in which the historian lives supplies his felt wants, unconscious motivations, and much of his admitted value scheme, . . . it is the present and not the past that supplies the controlling frame of relevance for his work."³⁸ We acknowledge the danger that Destler asserts in this theory of relativism in history: the dominant ideology is serviced by presentism. Subjectivism actually legitimizes the propagandizing of history.³⁹ So we must assume that any new rewriting of the history of Canudos will be as ideologically -bound as the previous versions.

The "official" discourses discussed here are dominated by outside projections of meaning onto the Canudos happenings, along with their labels (messianic, fanatic, Monarchist, atavistic, socialist . . .). They

simultaneously marginalize the target population and their own discourse (personal interviews, Conselheiro's writings, songs and verses). This leaves a void for modern historians to reconstruct the Canudos story "from the inside." At the same time the critic must beware any pretense to achieve this elusive goal. The peasant participant lacks certain tools (education, funds, an audience, access to the printed page, etc.) to tell his or her own story and, like the translator who may have access to the power of communication, is victim to his or her own subjectivity.

Critic Thomas Kuhn would argue that any objectivity in science is impossible. Scientific operations are inherently arbitrary since science is relatively autonomous and very much self-propelled: a theory is a schema whose elements are continually modified so to fit back into the theory. There is no real question of validation, or of objectivity--scientists are "paradigm-bound" which is the same as being ideologically bound. There is no basis for validation except a subjective one. In fiction as in non-fiction, we perpetuate our own myths relevant to our time.

Concluding Note

Throughout the discourses studied, we have seen the problematic of hermeneutic interpretation in action. No single model cannot allow for the complexities of reality.

We have illustrated that for each interpretation of the Canudos phenomenon, there is an alternative perspective, born of different historical circumstances and methods. We are all limited by the constructs of cognition. We must realize the constraints necessitated by the nature of human perception (a constantly changing human perception), but at the same time, we must not be disheartened. In the rapidly changing modern world we feel the need to break down boundaries separating the disciplines to evaluate the very process of attaining knowledge. Parallel to the function of an "omniscient" reader of the historical novel (as described in the previous chapter), we must make ourselves privy to alternative views. If we engage in this dialectic process, we may not only be better equipped to exercise critical judgement, but also have a deeper understanding of the world.

Notes

¹ In the recent publication of an annotated bibliography on Canudos, Canudos: Subsídios para a sua Reavaliação Histórica (Rio: Monteiro Aranha, S.A., 1986), historian Calasans titles his introductory article "Canudos não Euclidiano," attesting to the "misdirection" taken in the discipline of history. The volume calls for the re-evaluation of the written record of Canudos and a variety of primary and secondary sources are available for this re-evaluation, not to mention the potential to uncover documented information which could contribute to an updated reconstruction.

² Nertan Macedo, Memorial de Vilanova (Rio: O Cruzeiro, 1964) 133.

³ Several members of Conselheiro's inner circle were reformed bandits, proven capable of atrocities. One witness describes the brutal persecution and murder of the Mota family perpetrated by the bandit Vincentão, in Odorico, Tavares, Bahia: Imagens da Terra e do Povo (Rio: Jose Olímpio Editora, 1951) 265-66.

⁴ He wrote this under the pseudonym Jota Sara.

⁵ By this we mean there was no unbiased mediation, which excludes the obviously prejudicial program of friar Marciano whose mission it was to disperse the crowds from the settlement, the secret hand of local property owner baron Geremoabo to politically embarrass governor Viana--and ally Conselheiro--, and the personal grievance of local judge Leoni who was so instrumental in inflating local envy into national conflict. Not all were consolidated against Canudos: neighboring padre Rabino represented the priests who supported or at least tolerated Conselheiro's presence; local fazendeiro Pereira de Melo was among those who contributed monetarily to the Conselheiro's program--military chronicles note that he also provided supplies and mules to the army but was a recognized sympathizer of Canudos and even suspected spy.

⁶ See Eric R. Wolf, "Introduction," in Europe and the People without History (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982) 3-23.

⁷ Wolf, 6-7.

⁸ This term comes from W.H. Walsh in An Introduction to the Philosophy of History, 1951.

⁹ The terms 'causal' and 'finalist' are used in R.B. Braithwaite's, Scientific Explanation, in Adam Schaff, História e Verdade (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1986) 244.

¹⁰ In Mario Bunge, The Critical Approach to Science and Philosophy (London: Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1964) 411-12.

¹¹ The role of accident and intention is taken up solely in Vargas Llosa's historical novel; the other discourses, especially the social sciences, analyze in order to typify.

¹² Durval Viera de Aguiar, Descrições Práticas (Bahia: Tip. do Diário da Bahia, 1888)

¹³ Tavares, 267.

¹⁴ These letters are in the possession of Salvador library "Núcleo Sertão", UFBA.

¹⁵ Eul-Soo Pang explains what the Canudos writers have overlooked: after a struggle between the factions of Bahian familiocratic oligarchs Luis Viana and José Gonçalves--allied with the Baron of Geremoabo--Luis Viana came out on top and became governor in 1896. The area of Canudos was under the influence of the Baron of Geremoabo who was able to manipulate the local fazendeiros' concerns over the growing political influence of Conselheiro, the loss of labor to the settlement and loss of commerce. He launched anti-Vianist propaganda to eradicate conselheirista support for Viana. With the accusation of being Monarchist, Viana was forced to join the united front to destroy, for him, a potential influential ally. Conselheiro is here more of a pawn to personal ambitions than victim of a conspiracy of latifundists and he was perhaps less a threat to the status quo than a coparticipant in the coronelista network. See pp. 64-88 of Coronelismo e Oligarquias: 1889-1943 (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1979). Also, Levine's "Mud-Hut Jerusalem," Hispanic American Historical Review, 68, 3 (Aug. 1988): 525-72, contextualizes the political rivalry into its role in the Canudos conflict.

¹⁶ R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956) 79.

¹⁷ Macedo, I-XXI.

¹⁸ José Calasans, Conselheiro e a Escravidão (Salvador: S.A. Artes Gráficas, n.d.).

¹⁹ This raises a question pertinent to the materialist interpretation: Did the landowners want their freed slaves to remain as workers?--no one has yet researched the role of freed blacks in the Canudos phenomenon. Reportedly, due to the serious drought situation prior to this date, most slaves in the Northeast had already been sold off to southern fazendas: Robert Levine documents a mere 10% of the population in the Queimadas district to have been slaves.

²⁰ In Nertan Macedo's interview with former canudense Honório Vilanova, Honório says of Conselheiro: "The Pilgrim (i.e. Conselheiro) was a good and inoffensive beato, who lived so to point out the path to eternal salvation.", Memorial de Vilanova, 31, my translation, and that in 1873 the Conselheiro said he had one promise to fulfill: to construct 25 churches, 37. Glauco Carneiro records in História das Revoluções Brasileiras (Rio: O Cruzeiro, 1965) that famous Canudos survivor Pedrão said of Conselheiro, "He only preached good and he only did good works," 113, my translation; and Odorico Tavares' interviews in Bahia:

Imagens da Terra e do Povo, 1951 edition, show the Conselheiro to be a "holy man" who "only wanted to do the right thing" ("só levava para o bem . . ."), 275.

²¹ Calasans comments that this book written by Portuguese Manuel José Gonçalves Couto may be responsible for the predominance of mysticism in the interior and that its material descriptions of what should be taken as crimes against God and its extreme practices left a great impression on the sertanejos. Nertan Macedo also documents the importance of the Missão Abreviada to the Conselheiro's preachings. Memorial de Vilanova, 57.

²² Significantly, no mention is made here or in the other manuscript to the words of Euclides' famous prophecies, which leads us to question the validity of the movement's denomination of millenarian as defined by anthropological prophet theories.

²³ By "anachronistic," we mean that it failed because it was "before its time."

²⁴ Dantas Barreto mentions a certain elitism in the Canudos settlement which contradicts any 'democratic' sentiment: "João Abade, Antônio Vila-Nova and others that fed off of the fanatical credulity of these almost primitive people, on the other hand, dressed in a different way, principally so as not to be confused with the masses that they governed and who obeyed them with the satisfaction of a real duty, that dignified the masses in their sick aspirations," Descruição de Canudos (Pernambuco: "Jornal de Recife Editora, 1912") 15, my translation.

²⁵ Upon examination of survivor Honório Vilanova's description of the way Canudos operated, in Memorial de Vilanova we find that some elements are compatible with the socialist idea: everyone cared for their own and for each other, says Honório, because what belonged to one belonged to all. The inhabitants practiced good behavior ("bons costumes"), kept busy, and avoided crime. But the motivation was religious: Honório insists that the town, its organization and its community maintained a normal existence except that they all shared the same faith.

²⁶ Canudos shared the messianic characteristic of "redistribution" in a sacred economy. In "Unmasking the Politics of Religion," Journal of Latin American Lore, 7, 2 (Winter 1981) Pessar writes, "The expectation that the messiah would assist the needy became a challenge when the former settled in a sacred city and attracted several thousand followers. The institutions of leveling, redistribution, and communal labor found in millenarian

communities can be viewed not only as traditional customs by which millenarianists rejected capitalist values and institutions but also as a means by which messiahs ensured that they could continue to provide for all needy followers," 271.

²⁷ Macedo, 31.

²⁸ The materialists' depiction of prosperity is challenged in the military histories. Dantas Barreto describes the poverty of the town and the lack of hygiene for some and the relative wealth of others: "Some [women], meanwhile, exhibited relatively handsome dress, elegant in their simplicity, in which one could notice accents of culture and taste," 13, my translation. His portrayal incorporates a mixture of inhabitants, living styles, and motivations for residing in Canudos: there were those who were there to avoid work, "'a fartura sem responsabilidades," 13, and criminals in hiding. Although Barreto's portrait may describe a moment in the expansion of the town when increased population was not as rapidly assimilated, we can assume that in the midst of an economy in decline, there was relative economic stability.)

²⁹ Remember that Pereira de Queiroz stresses the elementary importance of kinship to the sertanejo culture, added to the fact that most of the Canudos inhabitants were women and children following their menfolk--composites of entire families. O Messianismo no Brasil e no Mundo (São Paulo: Dominus Editora, 1965) 229.

³⁰ Leonard Schultz and Henry Wetzels, Literature and History (Lanham: Univ. Press of America, 1983) 9.

³¹ See especially Hayden White, "Historical Text as Literary Artifact" in Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978) 81-100.

³² Vargas Llosa researched the Canudos campaign in Salvador archives. We suspect that it was the libelous newspaper reports that especially stimulated his interest not only because of the time he spent in the Instituto Geografico e Historico da Bahia where these were housed, but also because the Monarchist conspiracy scandal translates into a key element in the plot of his novel.

³³ This terms refers directly to a eulogistic essay entitled "Por Que Me Ufano de Meu País" written by the Conde Afonso Celso in 1898.

³⁴ In an unpublished article titled "El reverso fatal de los acontecimientos: Dos momentos de la degeneracion en la literatura."

³⁵ E. Bradford Burns, A History of Brazil (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970) 251-54.

³⁶ Euclides' assertion that the sertanejo type was a "retrograde" is a rationalization, inconsistent with his description of the mestizo type as unstable.

³⁷ Mandelbaum, who believes objectivity can be maintained in history, views the discipline as a corroborative process to which each historian from different epochs may contribute and reconcile their versions so that we may broaden and perfect our knowledge. Collingwood who perceives historiography as more a work of imagination than science because the past can only be reconstructed through the subjective consciousness of the historian, endorses modernizing the past. Hegel had a vision of history as a projection of the present over the past, therefore it reflects the deformation of the historian's ideology.

³⁸ Chester McArthur Destler, "Some Observations on Contemporary Historical Theory," The American Historical Review, LV, 3 (April 1950) 507.

³⁹ Destler cites Naziism as an extreme example of rewriting so to conform to present concerns, including debunking previously established empirical evidence, to interpret them through ideologically motivated theories. See 525-56.

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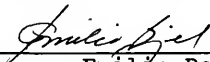
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

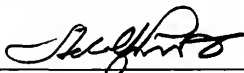
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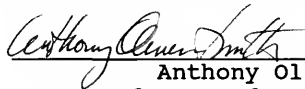
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